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Chronicles

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A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

INSTITUTIONALIZED WRITING

Are Universities the Last Stop for New Leftists and Burnt-Out Writers?

Bulgakov—A White Survivor of the Red Terror

Also, Handguns in Florida, the Homeless in North Dakota, and Lloyd's of London's New Tinkertoy Home

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Chronicles
A MAGAZINE OF AMERICAN CULTURE

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On the Cover

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Glasnost American style is all the rage among the nation's literati. At over a dozen universities, American academics are now waking up to the Soviet equivalents of *Good Morning America* and Richard Simmons. After years of watching our own People's Broadcasting System, students and faculty alike may now get a glimpse of the real thing. America being America, however, the language presents a real problem. Students have enough trouble understanding standard English, much less Russian. At Tufts, they have arranged simultaneous translators for their joint seminar with Moscow University. The topic? Oddly enough, it is not the novels of Solzhenitsyn or even Tolstoy, but arms control. We feel sure the American students stand more to gain than their Russian counterparts. The Soviets already know everything about arms control negotiations, and, apart from the Mafia, there is no one in the U.S. street-smart enough to deal with men who have had to climb their way to the top along the same stairs walked by third-century Roman emperors and the Borgias.

Speaking of a life of crime, that amiable crime novelist Julian Semyonov is running around Manhattan these days promoting the International Association of Crime Writers. Ever faithful to the Soviet interpretation of "international," Semyonov wants to incorporate both the Mystery Writers of America and the Private Eye Writers of America into his Moscow-backed organization. Wonder if there's a chapter in Kabul? According to the *New York Times*, Semyonov declares himself an "afficianado of New York." I, for one, believe him.

"For constitutional governments, close associations with tyrannies are risky." That was Demosthenes' advice to the Athenians on their own set of cultural and diplomatic exchanges with the fourth-century Mike Gorbachev, Philip of Macedon. Of course, every Greek knew the Macedonians were barbarians, but Philip spoke good Greek, displayed good manners when he needed to, and pointed to his legendary descent from Hercules. It took more than regular baths and a nodding acquaintance with literature to convince Demosthenes, who pointed out that Philip never made a treaty without intending to break it when the time was right. Reading Demosthenes' *Philippics* for the first time back in 1964, I remarked to my Greek professor, "This guy sounds as crazy as Barry Goldwater." My professor, a Goldwater Republican, agreed. Unfortunately, Philip succeeded in suborning enough Athenians to quiet their fears, and when he finally did conquer their city, the appeasers blamed Demosthenes for stirring up their friendly adversary. As another Greek, Pindar, put it: "I sing to those who can understand," that is to say, don't blame me when all American students will know how to speak idiomatic Russian. (TF)

Glasnost is a two-way street. The model's husband, Billy Joel, recently made a much-heralded tour of the Soviet Union, which was reported in great detail by magazines ranging from *USA Today* to *Entertainment Tonight*. "See Billy rock. See Ivan boogie." If Joel were

In the forthcoming issue of *Chronicles*:

Back to Nature

"In short, in a technological world there is no room for an ethics other than an ethics of technology. This is not the consequence of ill-will or of anybody's act of decision. A civilization consists of myriads of microscopic acts, interpreted according to a network of significations, themselves invisibly pulled together by some master-concepts. The mechanization of man is the master-concept presiding over our forms of existence, and mechanization itself is the product of science. . . . Thus all that our age is able to produce is an ethics of technology which is not a moral reflection *about*, but a method of finding ways to adjust to it. The truth is, one cannot harness technology without demoting science as a master-concept."

—from "Technology and the Ethical Imperative" by Thomas Molnar

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really rock and roll, he would have been as welcome as the young West German who landed his plane in Red Square. Perhaps the Politburo only wanted to get a closer look at Christie Brinkley.

The last American musician to be attacked in the Soviet press was Michael Jackson, and that was when he was merely a thriller, not bad. Begloved Michael represented, to the Soviets, everything that is wrong with the United States. Actually, Michael is hardly more eccentric than, say, Malcolm Forbes, and Michael works a heck of a lot harder.

Recently, *Pravda*, in the spirit of glasnost, attacked the only true American icon, Elvis. The King, *Pravda* charged, was not merely a "monster" who craved everything and indulged himself in drugs and food in copious amounts, but he also performed mediocre songs that he stole from blacks. Obviously, Elvis' self-apotheosis from rather oppressed, proletarian beginnings was ignored, and only his haute bourgeois being was indicated.

And we thought they would have appreciated the proletarian-who-made-good - only - to - be - destroyed - by - the - capitalist-system. It sounds like a play by Arthur Miller. (GV)

French anti-Americanism strikes again. This year the government of François Mitterrand awarded novelist William Styron the Medal of the Commander of the Legion of Honor. Styron joins the ranks of Leonard Bernstein and James Baldwin — both previous winners. Three years ago, when the French made Styron Commander of Arts and Letters, we wrote the following:

> Styron is particularly liked by President Mitterrand's Culture Minister, Jack Lang, the epitome of *gauchiste* 60's radicalism in France. Now that he's given up on Danny the Red, Lang has adopted Mr. Styron as his favorite culture traitor. After all, in an already long (some would say too long) career, Styron has managed to sell books by betraying first his people (the South) in *The Confessions of Nat Turner*, and then his adopted people (Jewish intellectuals in New York) in *Sophie's Choice*. Who knows what he might have in store for the French? On the other hand, maybe Jack Lang is simply indulging his well-advertised anti-Americanism. Out of sheer spite, French critics have always pretended to adore Jerry Lewis as the highest expression of American civilization. After all, Styron has done at least as much for the novel as Jerry did for film.

Le plus la même chose.

***Insanity* as a way of life** has finally become sanctified by the San Diego Superior Court. In a November 5 decision, Judge Judith McConnell awarded the custody of Brian Batey, 16, to a Mr. Craig Corbett, over the protests of the boy's mother, Mrs. Betty Lou Batey. Mr. Corbett's only claim to young Brian has been a homosexual liaison with the boy's father. The father, by the way, is dead from causes that the press has not disclosed.

Outside extraterrestrial California, Ms. McConnell's decree might seem, to put it mildly, disturbing. Mrs. Batey had divorced her homosexual husband — what healthy woman wouldn't? She had fought a long battle for custody of her son — what good mother wouldn't? But maternal love cut no ice with the California judge, who in a 1982 reversal of the original custody decision awarded young Brian to his biological father. Among other things, Mrs. Batey was faulted for trying to keep her son from meeting her husband and his "lover." Mrs. Batey's anxiety was viewed as a clearly criminal attitude, especially in the light of what subsequently happened.

And what did happen? Young Brian, the victim of California's "I'm OK, you're OK" sexual politics, eventually came to prefer the no-holds-barred lifestyle of his father's household. Hardly strange, in the view of a young boy's delight with a permanent holiday in a Disneyland, as opposed to the rigors and obligations of responsible manhood. Even before his 16th year, Brian Batey came on television to air his liking for his homosexual "stepfather / mother / or-whatever." His earnest, misinformed, minor's testimony was respected by a court of law, over his mother's rights and affection.

Corbett has magnanimously declared that Mrs. Batey may have limited access to her son. Corbett's tolerance for a way of life which the human race has been unable to shake off yet is to be commended. So is Judge McConnell's compassion and understanding, especially for the clout homosexual lobbies have in her neck of the woods. Young Brian Batey, however, growing up in a world of flickering "life-styles," may stumble upon what is right, before his stepfather's friends communicate to him more than a taste for designer aprons. But it will be no thanks to Mr. Corbett, Judge McConnell, or the media luminaries of both Coasts.

Bilingualism Causes Traffic Fatalities may well be the next headline you read in the land of Ted Kennedy and the Duke. In Amherst, "State officials and local organizations are teaming up to help curb the number of Hispanics arrested for driving without a license," writes Daniel Gonzales in the *Daily Hampshire Gazette*. The solution: oral driver's tests in Spanish, administered to the illiterate among the 20 percent Hispanic minority in the region.

In the Babel Sweepstakes, Massachusetts is still behind Colorado, where Judge Alvin Lichtenstein of the Denver District Court threw out a murder conviction of one Julio Sandoval because his Miranda rights had been read to him in American Spanish, instead of his native Mexican Spanish. In the great "polyglot boarding house" — to use Theodore Roosevelt's prophetic phrase — the voice of justice requires a dialect expert.

Unfortunately, traffic signs don't speak; they don't even have room for two languages — trying to select a language, much less a dialect at 60 miles an hour is a thrill we ought to leave to the Canadians.

The Colorado judge, though, is onto something: why bilingualism, instead of tri-, quatro-, or any number of "lingualisms"? Don't the Amish have a right to their German, or the Cajuns to their version of French? What about the Swedes in Illinois, or Norwegians in Wisconsin? How about the millions of Poles or Italians or Bohemians in Chicago? Why single out the Hispanics? Why not form a United Townships of America — a giant Switzerland or a United Nations, whose inhabitants have nothing in common but their monthly welfare checks?

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PLACE OF ASYLUM *by Thomas Fleming*

The theater is dead, the novel dying, poetry extinct; biography is the province of graveyard ghouls, and history a battleground on which disheveled armies of academic theorists contend with hucksters and prostitutes for the fate of an entire civilization. These conclusions of a temperate man in a good humor pretty much sum up the business of literature in our time, an age that cannot decide between the merits of John Irving and Tama Janowitz—our own Dickens and Thackeray—and chooses to elevate Prof. Bloom to the status of reigning Jeremiah. There are exceptions, good writers writing good books, but it is hard to escape the conviction that they are as irrelevant to the times as Dante and Thucydides; which is to say that they are highly relevant but largely ignored.

One review editor of our acquaintance sighs periodically over his monthly pile of publishers' catalogs. The author of *Ecclesiastes* probably knew of no more than a few hundred books, but the thought overwhelmed him with weariness of the spirit. He was unlucky enough to live before the *New York Review of Books*, whose exhausting actual reviews have made the reading of books obsolete. Of course the real purpose of all review journals has been to displace writers with critics, and this was true even in the days of the *Edinburgh Review*, when both authors and critics were veritable giants.

The causes of so much literary mortification? The pessimist can select his favorite from a list that includes mass literacy, mass marketing, and mass democracy—all have a justifiable appeal for the aspiring elitist and go a long way toward explaining the decline in standards in the literary marketplace. But the other side of the literature business is serious writing—fiction, verse, and scholarship, which is in a worse state than the "knockoffs" designed for the K-Mart book section.

Any attempt to discuss the fate of serious writing must take account of the circumstances in which it is practiced. Here and there an independent scholar or poet works between intervals of selling insurance or towing shrimp nets; an occasional serious novelist may make enough out of a book to support himself for a few years; but for steady living—regular income, social security, and health insurance—the citadels of higher learning have become the place of asylum for those who would lead the life of the mind.

Asylum is quite the *mot juste*, since the university is not only a refuge from which there is little hope of escaping, but it also resembles, as any visitor can tell, a mental hospital in more ways than one. In the film version of *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*, Jack Nicholson seizes upon the resemblance. When planning his fishing trip for the asylum inmates, he explains that he will tell people the lunatics are just college professors.

I am not thinking now of the most obvious zanies—the soft-faced androgynes preaching revolutionary Marxism to bored students, the lesbians and child-molesters who are eager to destroy whatever inhibitions American teenagers have left, the doddering old liberals who haven't reexamined a single assumption since FDR's last term (do they even know he's dead?). No, the bizarre minorities are only the bubbles on the surface of a stagnant pond. The really bizarre quality of academic life can only be measured by the mainstream of not-too-bright but not downright stupid plodders, who teach the same courses year after year and publish two reviews a decade in a journal where they know an editor, who put in 20-hour weeks for eight months and complain of low salaries, who introduce themselves everywhere as "Dr. Howard" or "Dr. Fine," and who despise the hardworking tradesman, plumbers, and real estate agents who earn enough to send their children off to college. Anti-intellectual to the very marrow of their being, they parade their little store of specialized learning to show that they are scholars, while at the same time waging war against any real work that might be going on. They thrive on meetings—the institutionalized form of Coleridge's person from Porlock.

One vignette should suffice. In payment for the sins of my youth, I found myself teaching at Miami of Ohio and fell in

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with a sociologist named something like Biff. Biff was a likable lout, forever asking his colleagues to meet him somewhere and "throw the old ball around." Never very good at math, he became a devotee of "humanistic sociology," by which he apparently meant editorializing on current events. His big chance came when the nearby county seat experienced the largest family murder in American history. Biff went on local television to explain the event. "It's simple," he declared, "an obvious case of repression-aggression." A middle-aged man blows away his brother, sister-in-law, parents, nieces, and nephews over a breakfast table dispute, and the academic finds a simple explanation in a phrase that, when you analyze it, means nothing. If there were a Nobel Prize for sociology, Biff would have been eligible.

In such an environment, it is hardly surprising that capable artists and scholars should find themselves doubly alienated, first from the real world beyond the academic groves and second from the folly and inconsequence of academic life. Small wonder that writers cultivate a Bohemian irresponsibility as a cover for their real seriousness. The public drunkenness, lechery, and malicious humor of writers-in-residence seem positively amiable and wholesome qualities when they are contrasted with the petty malice that serves as the norm of academic respectability.

Not all of them play the aesthete's game, but even those who buy their clothes from Brooks Brothers are subject to the same hothouse atmosphere and find themselves writing only for the connoisseurs. The poetry is especially bad, but who outside the academy has ever enjoyed any example of that swelling genre, the campus novel? The exceptions proving the rule are *Lucky Jim* and *A New Life*, both written by nonacademics and told from an outsider's point of view.

But the faults of academic novels are not restricted to the campus setting of so many of them. The problem is more basic. They constitute a kind of court literature designed to appeal only to a small circle of cognoscenti, with this difference: Much court literature is, in fact, antiprofessional and addressed to aristocratic amateurs with good taste. Our own academic writers, however, would never dream of writing a novel that could be enjoyed by, say, Roger Smith.

It is not so much the Royal courts that serve as a model but the Alexandrian Library. "Chickens in a coop"—so the writers at the Library were described by a satirist. The Alexandrian Library was the first actual institution to employ writers-in-residence, and under the first Ptolemies (third century B.C.) it attracted both scholars—like Eratosthenes, who first correctly calculated the earth's circumference—and poets like Callimachus and Apollonius. The Library flourished in an age of uneasy cosmopolitanism, and the literature it nourished—personal, idiosyncratic, technical—stood in stark contrast with the communal and religious poetry of the Greek city-states. The combination of offhand colloquialism with obscure references, technical brilliance with minor themes is the hallmark of Callimachus, and more than one modern critic has made the obvious comparison with T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound. Indeed, Pound's *Homage to Sextus Propertius* is a tribute to Callimachus' Roman disciple, an imitation of an imitation that acknowledges the influence of the master.

For the serious reader, Alexandrian verse can be very moving, but for the casual lover of poetry, it is often as perplexing as the *Cantos*—even the ancients found Lycophron's *Alexandra* impossible, and it is Lycophron, not Callimachus, that John Ashbery resembles—gibberish arranged attractively on the page. There are several reasons for the obscurity of Alexandrian verse, but the existence of the Library, with its vast collection of books and its staff of gabbling intellectuals, must have exerted a powerful pressure.

The parallels with our own time are too obvious to belabor: an urban cosmopolitan civilization whose deracinated intellectuals and writers travel about the world in search of adulation and security—"diaphanous gowns and regular meals," as W.C. Fields explains to his daughter in *You Can't Cheat an Honest Man*; a proliferation of books about books, a crushing sense of the past's masterpieces on which the writer reflects even as he is scurrying to distance himself.

How many serious novels today are really ironic literary criticism in the guise of fiction? Updike's *Roger's Version* comes immediately to mind, along with much John Barth, but it is not these obvious allusive patterns that define contemporary fiction so much as the layer upon layer of borrowed imagery and points of reference. There are writers like Doctorow and Hawkes who must lie awake nights calculating the little tricks that will keep dissertation writers busy until the end of the century. If the end result were anywhere near so good as Callimachus' epigrams and hymns or Apollonius' little epic, the *Argonautica*, a temperate man might be inclined to merciful judgment. In fact, the state of serious writing in the country is far worse than I have suggested in this best-case comparison with Alexandria, and the result of all the institutionalization of writing in America has been to literature a genuinely academic question.

January 1, 1987

by Elizabeth Marion

HAPPY NEW YEAR! SIX STABBINGS OVERNIGHT

ARSON SUSPECTED IN BIG HOTEL FIRE

Appropriately dense, cold moisture shrouds

CONGRESSMEN RECONVENE, DISCUSS THE DIRE

EFFECTS OF COUNTRY'S DEBT; VOTE SELVES A RAISE

what's past, what's yet to come, prevents our seeing

DRUG OVERDOSE KILLS TEEN PUNK ROCK CRAZE

PERSISTS MURDERER GIVEN LATE REPRIEVE

what's near, distorts heard sounds, both soft and loud:

HELL HATH NO FURY—FEW LEFT WHO BELIEVE

BABY ABANDONED AFTER PARENTS FIGHT

in fog we live and move and have our being.

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THOUGHTS ON MIKHAIL BULGAKOV

by Leon Steinmetz

I always think of Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov with tenderness, as if he were my relative, and a very close and dear one at that. Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov was not my relative. I was not even fortunate to know him personally—he died a few years before I was born.

Once, in a conversation with the editor of this magazine, the name Bulgakov came up. My interlocutor, who had read an English translation of *The Master and Margarita*, as well as some of Bulgakov's plays, spoke of him with great respect, and then asked: "But still, why do you say that one *must* read Bulgakov?" This essay is my modest attempt to answer that question.

Besides that, *The Master and Margarita*, the novel which Bulgakov considered to be the most important thing in his life (he died in 1940 at the age of 48), which he, even gravely ill, blind, continued dictating to his wife until, literally, his last days; the novel, in which the visit of Soviet Moscow by the Spirits of Darkness intertwines with the story of Jesus of Nazareth—this novel is currently being produced at the avant-garde American Repertory Theater by the famous Soviet dissident-modernist-director (the words can be put in any order) Mr. Yuri Lyubimov. But about this later.

* * *

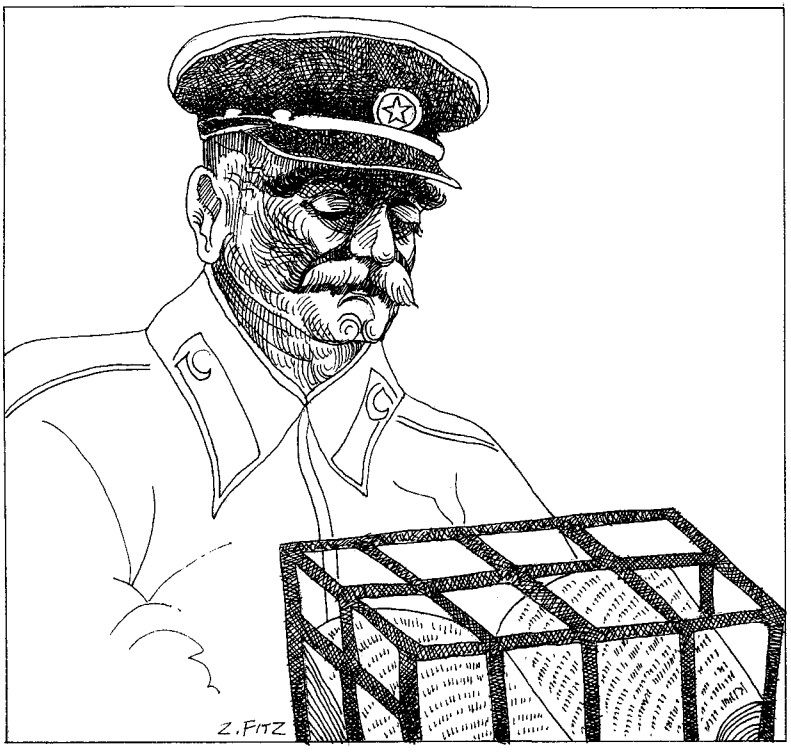
People who knew Bulgakov personally remember him as a very kind and lighthearted man. The idea that a true artistic genius cannot fail to be a good man sounds now hopelessly old-fashioned. The misanthropy of Baudelaire, the cynicism of Duchamp, the professional dishonesty of Mayakovsky, or the hooliganism of Pollock seem to be the natural attributes of contemporary genius—defying everything and everyone, concentrating exclusively on himself, his conscience or subconscience, a rebel and a loner.

But let's pause for a moment and contemplate what, after all, artistic genius is. Michelangelo, when he said that a great sculpture already exists in a block of marble, and the task of the sculptor is simply to remove, chip away the unneeded pieces and "free" it, was not entirely joking.

And like this Michelangelo's sculpture concealed in a block of marble, perhaps, beautiful images, divine sounds and voices, profound ideas exist around us, unseen and unheard by us—ordinary mortals. A genius, like a supersensitive antenna, picks them up, translates them into our language, embodies them into visible forms, and hands them to us.

The main impulse of a true genius is not to look *into* himself, with endless digging into his conscience and subconscience—as Pasternak said, "conscience is like the headlights of a car; their light directed outward illuminates the way, directed inward leads to catastrophe"—but to look *out* of himself. And to give. And if the main impulse of your existence is the desire to *give*, you cannot really be a nasty character. That's what, probably, Pushkin had in mind when he exclaimed in his *Mozart and Salieri*: "Genius and villainy are incompatible."

By education Bulgakov was a physician. After graduating from the Kiev University Medical School, he went to work in a remote provincial village, and there, in that godforsaken place, far from the big cities, far from, as he wrote, "opera, street



Leon Steinmetz teaches writing at Harvard. His essays have appeared in Commentary *and* National Review. *His short story "A Child's Joke" in the May 1987 issue opened our fiction section.*

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lights, comfortable operating-rooms," being the only physician for dozens of snowy miles around, he worked without sparing himself, 12 to 14 hours a day, often without accepting a penny from his benighted peasant-patients.

By his very being, by his doctor's hands (and not by ideas invented in big cities), trying to do for them everything he could, he, at the same time, did not entertain any idealistic illusions regarding the people, the "muzhiks."

In his brilliant novel *The White Guard*, the intelligent and brave artillery captain Myshlaevsky (having spent a dreadful January night in the snow, in the trenches near Kiev, where he, with a unit of officers as idealistic as he, defended the city from the nationalist bands of ataman Petlyura) exclaims when he is asked about the fires in the city's outskirts: " . . . and that's, dammit, your God-bearing people of Dostoevsky's torching the city!"

This sober statement is Bulgakov's answer to all the propagators of the idea of "God-bearing peoples," as well as all the prosecutors shouting about "Murderer peoples."

There are no "God-bearing peoples," Bulgakov says; *each* nation is capable of producing the cutthroats of ataman Petlyura (or Ernst Kaltenbrunner or Pol Pot, we might add). Just as there are *individual* murderers but no *nation* murderers, there are no "God-bearing" *nations*, only "God-bearing" *individuals*.

Bulgakov, as, perhaps, only Chekhov, was remarkably free from that infection which afflicted all great Russian writers—the infection of the utopian idealization of "the muzhik." With the clear, calm eye of a doctor he looked at this benighted, oppressed, superstitious people he loved and attended.

At that time, working as a country doctor, Bulgakov started writing. As he afterwards recalled, "One night, in the bleak autumn of 1919, traveling in a derelict train, by the light of a small candle stuck in a kerosene bottle, I wrote my first little story."

Later, when he was a famous writer, someone asked him what one needs in order to write well. "Just two things," Bulgakov answered, "first—you should write only what you can *see* vividly in your mind, and second—you must truly love your characters."

Bulgakov is often compared with Gogol. But this is not entirely correct. Yes, his feats of imagination, surrealistic juxtaposition of episodes, even his at times hurried, slightly breathless narrator's voice do remind one of Gogol. However, Gogol anything but loved his characters. He, indeed, loved to vivisect them. Bulgakov, on the other hand, relates to his characters passionately. But it is not the passion of Dostoevsky, one of the main ingredients of which was pity (quite often rather hysterical). One of the main ingredients of Bulgakov's passion is respect, and the admiration for human dignity.

It was dignity that gave Captain Myshlaevsky, Colonel Nay-Turs, the Turbin family from *The White Guard*, the strength to live through the savage years of the civil war; it was dignity that sustained the life of Bulgakov's favorite hero (he wrote a novel and a play about him), Jean Baptiste Poquelin de Molière; it was dignity that maintained Bulgakov's own existence when he, as a young doctor, was struggling with what he eloquently called the "Egyptian darkness" ("No . . . I'll fight. I shall . . . I . . . And sweet sleep envelopes me after the night's trials. Egyptian darkness enshrouds me like a fog . . . and I'm within it . . . either with a sword, or with a stethoscope. I'm walking . . . I'm fighting . . . " he writes in *The Notes of a Young Doctor*) and later, when he, as a well-known writer, was trying to survive in the ghastly Moscow of the 1930's.

* * *

In his themes, world view, style, Bulgakov is a distinctively modern writer. Yet there is one crucial moment which separates him from the mainstream of what is commonly called modern prose and makes him a direct descendant of the great classical narrative tradition.

As David Hume said, writing should be simple, but not obvious. (What a simple but *not* obvious statement itself!) In the works of great writers—be it Cervantes or Swift, Balzac or Goethe, Dickens or Flaubert, Tolstoy or Chekhov—ideas, thoughts, and emotions are profound and complex (*how* profound and *how* complex depends, of course, upon the genius of the individual writer), but the style, almost without exception, is clear, direct, and simple. Sometimes, as in the case of later Tolstoy, even deliberately simplified for maximum accessibility.

One of the prominent traits of "serious" modern writing is exactly the opposite. Emotions, thoughts, ideas most often are *un*complex, banal, or even plainly stupid, but the style is contrived, tangled, and baroque. An ordinary reader is confused and perplexed. It seems to him that in order to understand it, he must have a Ph.D. in psychology and a deep experience in psychoanalysis. And frustrated, he plunges into the kind of writing where all these platitude ideas and mediocre thoughts are expressed in a style simple *and* obvious. Then, *Love Story* supplants for him *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, *2001: A Space Odyssey* takes the place of *Gulliver's Travels*, and the stories of Ann Beattie replace the stories of Anton Chekhov.

Comparing the prose of Turgenev (which he truly enjoyed) and Tolstoy, Vladimir Nabokov once observed that when you read Turgenev you continually admire his writing virtuosity, but reading Tolstoy you so entirely *live* in his prose that you don't even notice *his* mastery, and you have to "step back" in order to appreciate his dazzling craftsmanship.

The same may, in a way, be said about Bulgakov's prose. I cannot resist quoting here an excerpt—describing a birth on the bank of a stream—from *The Notes of a Young Doctor*. Early one spring morning, when the doctor-narrator is in his bedroom shaving, the hospital janitor Yegorych, wearing big battered boots, charges in and announces that "a birth is taking place in the bushes above the stream."

> I remember wiping my left cheek with a towel and dashing off with Yegorych. And the three of us running to the stream, which was muddy and swollen among naked clumps of willow—the midwife with her forceps, a bundle of gauze and a jar of iodine; I, my eyes popping out of my head, and behind us, Yegorych.
>
> Every five steps he squatted down on the ground and, cursing, tugged at his left boot: its sole had torn loose. The wind flew into our faces, the sweet, savage wind of the Russian spring; the midwife Pelageya Ivanovna's comb fell from her hair, her bun came loose and flapped against her shoulder.
>
> "Why the devil do you drink away all your

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money?" I muttered at Yegorych as we ran. "It's disgusting. You're a hospital janitor, yet you go around like a bum."

"What kind of money is that?" Yegorych snarled back at me, "for twenty rubles a month putting myself through all this torment . . . Oh, damn this thing!" He was beating his foot against the ground like a mad horse. "Money . . . I don't even get enough for food-drink . . . "

"Sure, drink especially," I panted hoarsely, "that's why you slouch around like a tramp . . . "

A faint, doleful cry came from near the little rotting bridge, and faded away. We ran up and saw a disheveled woman, writhing in pain. Her kerchief had slipped off, her hair had stuck to her sweaty forehead; she was rolling her eyes in agony, tearing at her sheepskin with her nails. Bright fresh blood had spattered the first thin, pale-green grass, just broken through the rich, waterlogged soil.

"She didn't make it, she didn't make it," Pelageya Ivanovna, bareheaded, looking like a witch, kept saying, unwrapping the gauze.

And there, to the cheerful roar of water rushing through the blackened timber piers of the bridge, Pelageya Ivanovna and I delivered a baby of the male sex. We delivered him alive and saved the mother. Then two nurses and Yegorych—his left foot bare, he had finally freed himself from the detested rotten sole—carried the mother to the hospital on a stretcher.

Later, when she was lying there under the bedclothes, quiet and pale, when her baby was lying beside her in a cradle, and everything was calm, I asked her:

"Couldn't you find a better place to give birth than the bridge, mother? Why didn't you get a horse-cart?"

She answered:

"My father-in-law wouldn't give me a horse. It's only five versts, he said, you can walk it. You're a healthy lass. There's no point in tiring a horse . . . "

"Your father-in-law is a fool and a swine," I replied.

The striking description of the turbid, swollen stream amid the naked clumps of willow, the water rushing through the darkened mouth of the bridge, almost physically describes childbirth. Yet, the description is remarkably uncontrived. Besides, Bulgakov's pantheistic sense of Nature, his high piercing lyricism are never sentimental. Humor, interwoven into the narration, removes from it the slightest tint of sentimentality.

* * *

But Bulgakov's humor is not always kind and lighthearted. A slight twist and it turns into the sharpest satire. This satire is directed against general human follies and against much more specific ones, those that he saw multiplying with such devilish speed in the new Soviet Russia.

Thus the utopian concept of remaking the world through purely scientific means was embodied in his novella *The Fatal Eggs*. Its hero, a quiet scientist, Professor Persikov (Peachman), discovers in his laboratory a certain "Ray of Life." The professor's discovery is immediately confiscated and by the directive of the energetic government is put to practice. The best chickens' eggs are brought from the West in order to zap them with this Soviet "Ray of Life" so that unprecedented, gigantic Socialist chickens will hatch out. However, as a result of someone's carelessness, the boxes with the eggs are mixed up, and not chickens' but snake eggs get under the "Ray of Life," which produces snakes of enormous size. It is impossible to destroy them, and they crawl all over Moscow. Bulgakov was one of the first writers (among those not emigrating after the Revolution) who also clearly saw what was going to happen with literature in the new Soviet state. How the soon-to-be established Union of Writers would become the main executioner (literally) of its members and the chief responsibility of the Union chairman would be to supply the KGB with the names of writers to be shot or shipped off to the Gulag.

The Soviet idea of creating a "New Man" is depicted by Bulgakov in his novella *A Dog's Heart*, in which a wealthy, well-known and well-groomed doctor in an azure gown, Phillip Phillipych, conducts a medical experiment on a stray dog—transplants into him a human cerebellum and some endocrine glands—the result of which is that the scruffy, hungry, but good-natured dog Sharik (a very typical Russian dog's name) is transformed into a man—the shortish, bandy-legged, mean-spirited lumpen proletarian Sharikov (a fairly common Russian surname). This Sharikov immediately makes skillful use of all the Soviet slogans, joins first a society for the annihilation of stray cats, then the GPU (former name of the KGB) tries to throw his creator (the doctor) out of his own apartment, writes reports denouncing him to the authorities, and demands that he be arrested. If it were not for the patronage of some party dignitaries who need Phillip Phillipych—he performs operations of sexual rejuvenation on them—the doctor in the azure gown would have been hauled off to the Gulag. Phillip Phillipych eventually succeeds in luring Sharikov into the operating room, where he transplants back into him his dog's cerebellum and endocrine glands. Besides its apparent metaphysical meaning, *A Dog's Heart* hilariously describes the absurdities and havoc of Soviet postrevolutionary life when people, in Bulgakov's words, "start pissing past the toilet bowl."

In its merciless satire this novella can be compared to Orwell's *Animal Farm*, with Bulgakov's piece being, in my view, more biting. Such works left no doubt about Bulgakov's attitude toward the new regime. It wasn't even the Aesopian language, so widespread in Communist countries—Bulgakov expressed his disgust openly.

The surprising and paradoxical thing about all this was that the writer who dared to do it was not sent to the Gulag. The party hacks, of course, came down on him. He was called "a bourgeois flunkey," "a literary pest." After 1927 he practically couldn't publish his works, but he was *never* arrested. He died his own death in his own bed. Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov was not even exiled from Moscow.

This happened because of the personal and rather puzzling attitude toward Bulgakov of one man—Joseph Stalin.

The brutal dictator who had a barbaric taste in the visual arts and a tin ear in music had a peculiar attitude toward matters of literature. He, of course, vigorously implanted dead and wooden socialist realism into literature, as he did in all other arts, but that was for the masses. There is strong reason to believe that he could (however paradoxical it sounds) distinguish great writing and personally valued it.

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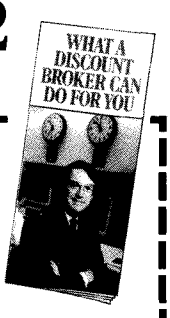

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While Stalin was alive, Pasternak was never seriously persecuted, although he *never* wrote anything glorifying Stalin. (As a matter of fact, glorifying him didn't save many mediocre poets from being deported to the Gulag.) Mandelstam was deported, but only after he wrote such a devastatingly stinging poem insulting Stalin personally that any other poet would have been shot on the spot for writing it.

And then, Bulgakov. After his novel *The White Guard* was published in the literary journal *Rossiya* (subsequently closed down), it attracted the attention of the celebrated Moscow Art Theater, whose head, Stanislavsky, proposed to Bulgakov that he write a play based on his novel.

In 1926, when Bulgakov's works were published less and less, and he was under constant attack from the party critics, his play *The Days of the Turbins*, based on his novel, was produced at the Art Theater. Not only were White officers walking on the stage of Russia's most renowned theater, which in itself was unheard of, these White officers were portrayed with profound sympathy. The critics now openly called for Bulgakov to be shot and the theater to be shut down. The mildest accusation was this (typically Soviet) one: "He yielded the rostrum to the enemy!"

Despite these howls, however, Bulgakov was not shot, the theater was not closed down, and the play was not banned. The fact was, Stalin was coming to the theater *regularly* to see it. From his personal loge, hidden from other viewers behind a slightly drawn curtain, he, according to the Art Theater's archives, saw *The Days of the Turbins* at least 15 times.

In literature Stalin's main interests were poetry (there were rumors in Moscow that he himself wrote poetry, although his poems were *never* published—neither while he was alive nor after his death) and drama. Thus, he personally read *every* film-script that was being prepared for production, "editing" the scripts with a thick blue pencil.

What was it that attracted him so in Bulgakov's play? Just its literary qualities? Or did he derive some pathological satisfaction from the fact that the movement he had destroyed consisted of *decent* people. Or maybe, deep in his heart, he despised the Bolsheviks (after all, he physically annihilated more Bolsheviks than Hitler) and, in spite of all the Marxist-Leninist demagoguery, he wanted to see himself as tsar and not as the leader of the proletariat. Interestingly enough, he soon canceled the exotically romantic uniform of the Red Army—its high pointed helmets and long, down to the heels greatcoats—and dressed Soviet officers in uniforms that were absolutely identical to those of the tsarist army.

Whatever all the motivations may have been behind Stalin's attraction to *The Days of the Turbins*, they turned out to be crucial for Bulgakov.

* * *

In 1930, when his prose had not been published and all his plays, except for *The Days of the Turbins*, had, one after the other, been banned, Bulgakov, on the personal order of Stalin, was appointed a producer-director of the Moscow Art Theater. This was a blessing for him since theater, from his youth, had been his passion.

"The curtain was open and the stage gaped. It was solemn, mysterious and empty. Its corners were flooded in darkness, but in the middle, gleaming faintly, stood a prancing golden horse. . . . 'This is my world' . . . " whispers Bulgakov through the lips of his hero, the dramatist Maksudov.

At the Art Theater he worked on the classics, adapting great novels to the stage—Gogol's *Dead Souls*, *War and Peace*, *Don Quixote*—producing them and, sometimes, even acting in them himself. Thus, in his production of Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, he brilliantly played the part of the President of the Court. Bulgakov's love for theater, for *theatricality*, focused on his fascination with Molière. While working as a producer-director, he wrote a biographical novel and a play about Molière, *A Cabal of Hypocrites*. In 1936 he staged it at the Art Theater, but after several sold-out performances, this play was also banned.

A Cabal of Hypocrites is not only a play about Molière, it is also a play about the very essence of theater (as, in a way, Fellini's *8-1/2* is a film about the very essence of film), about the lightness of genius and the leaden heaviness of absolute power; about hypocrisy and the splendor of 17th-century Paris. But it is also a play about the 20th century, in which unintrusively, in a very subtle line, there runs a parallel: Louis-Molière and Stalin-Bulgakov.

One scene containing a conversation between Louis and Molière, in which the king gives Molière permission to stage *Tartuffe* in Palais Royal, conveys the atmosphere of Bulgakov's only conversation with Stalin, when Stalin unexpectedly telephoned him in the middle of the night. (As it is known, Stalin called writers only twice. The first time was his famous call to Pasternak, when he asked Pasternak's opinion about Mandelstram's poetry, and the second time—to Bulgakov.)

The result of this conversation was Bulgakov's appointment to the Art Theater. However, having done Bulgakov this favor, Stalin, at the same time, banned all his plays except *The Days of the Turbins* (and even this one he permitted in one theater only; again, personally enjoying the play, he was categorically against the *masses* seeing it), and he flatly refused Bulgakov's numerous requests for permission to travel to Paris while he was working on his novel and play about Molière.

Many years ago, when I first came to Paris, I walked to the corner of Richelieu and Therese Streets where stands the famous statue of Molière. I stood beside it and thought of what Mikhail Afanasyevich Bulgakov would have given to be in my place. I stood beside this bronze statue of the genius dramatist and recalled the beginning of Bulgakov's novel about him, when the author addresses an imagined mid-wife at the birth of Molière:

> And so, I am wearing this kaftan with enormous pockets, and in my hand is not a steel but a quill pen. Wax candles are burning in front of me and my brain is on fire. "Madame"—I say—"please, turn this baby carefully, don't forget that he was born prematurely. The death of this baby would be a tremendous loss for your country!"
>
> "My God, Madame Poquelin will have another one!"
>
> "Madame Poquelin will never have another one like him, and no other Madame . . . will ever have one like him."
>
> "You amaze me, Monsieur!

Molière the mocker, author of *The Cheats of Scapin*; Molière the satirist of genius, author of *Tartuffe*; Molière the philosopher, author of *The Misanthrope*; these Molièrian qualities were present in Bulgakov, and they were realized with

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remarkable force in the novel which he considered the main work of his life—*The Master and Margarita*.

* * *

Bulgakov worked on this novel for 12 years, from 1928 to 1940, but it was published only in 1966—26 years after the author's death. Very few people knew about the existence of the manuscript and still fewer—only the author's closest friends—had read it. The novel is unusual. Boundless fantasy intertwines in it with serene reality, buffoonery with profound seriousness, satire with genuine religious feeling. On the pages of the novel exist side by side Muscovites of the 1930's and medieval witches and devils, Soviet bureaucrats, and Jesus of Nazareth (Yeshua Ha-Notsri, as Bulgakov calls him), Goethe's Mephistopheles and "the fifth Procurator of Judea, the knight Pontius Pilate."

And all of them whirl in the vortex of a tense, gripping plot, at the center of which is placed a love story of a contemporary man—the Master, writing a novel about Pilate—and his mistress, Margarita.

Bulgakov's novel is distinctively modern, yet one hears in it the echoes of Greek satires and medieval mystery plays, traditions of Rabelais, Goethe, European fantastic novels of the 18th century. Actually, *The Master and Margarita* is a much more "European" than a "Russian" novel. However, the response it generated in the West cannot even be compared with the tremendous impact its publication created in Russia (although, as one knows, Russian readers are quite accustomed to great literature).

And it is not simply because the translations are of a very poor quality (by the way, they are, at least the English ones), but because the *main* layers of the novel are much closer to the contemporary Russian than to the contemporary Western reader.

Here are these layers.

The first one—Judeo-Christianity.

For Western, contemporary, pragmatic man the Judeo-Christian tradition has become so habitual that it often means nothing more to him than an old, boring ritual. It has become, in fact, so habitual to many people that it often has no meaning for them whatsoever. This largely explains the current spread in the West of all sorts of fringe religious sects—people frantically searching for "fresh" religious knowledge and excitement which, they think, the Judeo-Christian tradition cannot give them.

In the Soviet Union exactly the opposite is the case. The Christian system (as, in this regard, all religious systems) exists in the atmosphere of a dedicated annihilation—from the physical demolition of churches right after the 1917 Bolshevik seizure of power, to the ongoing penetration of church organizations by young cadres of the KGB, appropriately attired in cassocks and crosses, who, while moving up through the ranks of the priesthood, at the same time, secretly, move up through the ranks of the KGB. (As a matter of fact, observing this time-tested Soviet technique of getting *inside* religious organizations, a heretical thought comes to mind—could it be that some outspoken champions of *Western* "liberation" theology also have shoulder-straps under their cassocks?)

Well, in all this grim reality there is a comforting aspect, however, and it is that the Bolsheviks, in trying to destroy Christianity and turning it into a *persecuted* religion, gave it, in the Soviet Union, the strength, vitality, and appeal which can only be compared with the strength, vitality, and appeal of early Christianity of the Roman catacombs. And another thing—in Russia the Byzantine tradition of Christian mysticism makes it even more attractive and meaningful to people.

The second layer—we can call it the Faust-Mephistophelian.

This is the spiritualism which came to Russia from the West, particularly from Germany, and which was as important for the development of Europeanized Russia as, before that, the Eastern, Byzantine spiritualism was important for the development of Kievan Rus.

The incessant *German* obsession—insatiable desire to get to the heart, to the first cause of all things, to understand the nature of the Lord of Darkness in all of his manifestations, carnal, eternal, metaphysical—and, at the same time, the feeling of ambiguity of this all-powerful "Spirit of Evil and Sovereign of Shadows" became a passionate *Russian* obsession.

"You don't accept the existence of shadows and of evil," Bulgakov's Woland-Mephistopheles tells Yeshua's disciple Matthew Levi, "but think now, think of what would your good be doing if there were no evil, and what would the earth look like if all shadows disappeared from it? . . . Do you want to strip the globe bare taking away from it all the trees and all that is alive, so that you can satisfy your desire for naked light?"

And then the third layer—Soviet everyday life, the meanness of which intertwines with such impenetrable stupidity that even the worldly Woland is sometimes lost.

For the contemporary Western reader who hasn't experienced Soviet reality personally, a genuine understanding may well be impossible. As it is impossible, for example, to understand from without the real meaning of these celebrated Russian gatherings of intellectuals in a kitchen (gatherings about which every Western journalist who visits the Soviet Union writes with such enthusiasm), when endless quantities of vodka and tea are consumed, and conversations last till dawn about the latest work of Nabokov or the unpublished verses of Mandelstam or the newest essay on Hellenism just banned by the censors.

How different these gatherings are from the excruciatingly dull parties attended by the literati, say, in Cambridge, Massachusetts! But then, in all fairness, this intellectual excitement, this remarkable sense of camaraderie of a dozen or so people gathered in someone's kitchen somewhere in Moscow or in Leningrad takes place not because Russian intellectuals are brighter or better than their Western counterparts, but because in the Soviet Union there exists among people this keen feeling—*we* and *they*.

We are now sitting here, in this warm, tiny kitchen, and outside the black window are *they*. Our very existence is entirely in their hands. The only thing they haven't taken from us is our ability to think. In all other respects we are utterly helpless against them.

And because of that, one must be born in contemporary Russia to understand fully the emotions that envelop a Soviet citizen when he reads, for instance, a passage from *The Master and Margarita*, which describes how two servants of Woland-Mephistopheles—one, called Koroviev ("Cowman"), a puny imp with a nasal twang, wearing a broken pince-nez, and the other one, Azazello, a redhead with a walleye and a protruding fang—are having breakfast when

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suddenly they hear behind their apartment door these all-too-familiar, terrifying steps of several men coming up the stairs.

"What are those footsteps on the stairs?" asked Koroviev, fiddling with his spoon in a cup of black coffee.

"I guess they're coming to arrest us," answered Azazello, and downed a shot of cognac.

"Ah . . . well, well . . . " responded Koroviev.

And the Soviet reader, his heart sinking in excitement, is waiting for the KGB with their Mausers to try to arrest two charming fiends.

Throughout the entire novel, there runs the refrain of Bulgakov's idea that "manuscripts don't burn." And precisely because "manuscripts don't burn," when once, in a rainy autumn night the Master, frustrated by the attacks on his novel about Pilate, burns it, Margarita, appearing unexpectedly in his small basement apartment, rushes to the stove and with her bare hands snatches the half-burned notebooks from the fire.

And precisely because "manuscripts don't burn," those chapters of the novel that Margarita couldn't save are returned to the Master by the all-powerful Woland.

And precisely because "manuscripts don't burn," Bulgakov's wife, Elena Sergeevna, in real life rescues her husband's novel—which Bulgakov, frustrated by the attacks on him, once tried to burn—and later, after his death, protects and saves the manuscript, the same way as another woman, Nadezhda Mandelstam, saved (but in her case with just her memory) the poetry of her husband.

When *The Master and Margarita* was first published, it astounded me. Then, for many years, I didn't open it for fear of being disenchanted. But my fear was unwarranted. Recently I read it again. And again Bulgakov's prose gladdened and overwhelmed me.

As cadenced and simple as before were the pages devoted to "the eternal city of Yerushalaim"; as grandiose and cosmic as before was the unequaled in Russian prose style of the chapters about Woland-Mephistopheles; as mercilessly funny as before were the descriptions of Soviet Moscow; and as heart-wrenching and unsentimental as before was the love story of the Master and Margarita.

* * *

And now this novel is being prepared for the stage at the celebrated avant-garde American Repertory Theater in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Working on the production is the man who adapted *The Master and Margarita* for theater, Mr. Yuri Lyubimov, a recent Soviet émigré and former artistic director of the celebrated avant-garde Moscow Taganka Theater.

The collaboration of the ART and Mr. Lyubimov is not accidental. The creative philosophy and style of the ART and Taganka are remarkably close. Long ago, in Moscow, I saw Lyubimov's production of *Hamlet*. Western critics hailed it as a "fresh interpretation of Shakespeare, and a unique intellectual discovery." I remember the stage hung from top to bottom with dirty burlap sacks (the sets during the performance were not changed). From behind them, waving the sacks, the actors would rush out, unintelligently shouting out lines of Pasternak's brilliant translation of *Hamlet*, and then disappear. From time to time the Prince of Denmark himself—short, squat, wearing a greasy sweater, guitar in hand—would appear and, having sat down on an overturned garbage-pail, would begin to sing hoarsely some base street songs, which had absolutely nothing to do with either Shakespeare or Pasternak.

The most recent "intellectual discovery" of Mr. Lyubimov—his interpretation of *Crime and Punishment*—is set in the same creative key. And in exactly the same creative key are interpreted at the acclaimed ART the plays of Molière, Shakespeare, Pirandello.

According to Western critics, Mr. Lyubimov represents contemporary Russia's highest theatrical achievement. While I was reading his adaptation of Bulgakov's novel, I for some reason recalled the words which Robinson Crusoe's pet parrot shouted to Robinson. "Poor, poor Robin Crusoe!" shouted the parrot, "poor Robin Crusoe!" "Poor, poor Russia!" I suddenly felt like shouting. "You must be truly miserable if things like this represent now the highest points of your culture!"

But then I stood up, went to the bookshelf, took out a Bulgakov volume, and opened it. Soon I completely forgot everything else. I was happy and content once again.

P.S. An interesting development occurred recently. A scandal broke out between Mr. Lyubimov and ART. Mr. Lyubimov accused ART of provincialism, dishonesty, and bad taste, and ART accused Mr. Lyubimov of phony intellectualism, impudence, and bad faith. I wholeheartedly agree with both, although what the real reason was for the scandal we might never know. Maybe Mr. Lyubimov wanted the actors to deliver their parts standing on their heads, and ART thought it was not creative enough. Or perhaps ART wanted them to be submerged in water and pronounce their lines through snorkels, and Mr. Lyubimov felt that philosophically it was giving the wrong message. In any event, the Lyubimov-ART production of *The Master and Margarita* has been canceled. Bulgakov is saved . . . for a while.

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"A Leninist cannot simply be a specialist in his favorite branch of science. . . . He must be an active participant in the political leadership of his country."

—Slogan of Moscow University

Substitute "professor" for "Leninist" and the quotation would appear almost a cliché to many American academicians. Yet such corollary Leninist themes and variations have become a commonplace in the American university. They are not put forth by the U.S. government, university boards of trustees, or university presidents. They are practiced by members of the academy themselves. There are professors at reputable universities who insist that merely teaching Marxist radicalism is not enough—the teacher must also be "an active participant" in the oncoming revolution.

Professor Howard Zinn argues that "to be a radical and not an activist is a contradiction." Then he adds that only activists can write the best "history" and that "the binding power of social action itself" will bring about "value-directed history." Professor Zinn claims that "in a world where justice is maldistributed, there is no such thing as a 'neutral' or representative recapitulation of the facts. . . . Truth must be shaped by present conditions and future requirements."

Another example of the New Campus Politics is an article by Richard Lewontin, a Harvard biologist. After asking, "What does Marxism have to offer the bourgeois university?" Lewontin replies: "preferably, nothing." He explains:

> That is, Marxism can do nothing *for* the university: the real question is what can Marxists do *to* and *in* the university. . . . For the natural and social scientist the answer is very clear. The university is a factory that makes weapons—ideological weapons—for class struggle, for class warfare, and trains people in their use. It has no other leading and important function in the social organization.

Lewontin goes on to say:

> The social university is not primarily concerned with the abstract pursuit of scholarship, but with the utilization of knowledge obtained through scholarship to obtain social change. There, it does not recognize the right of its members to do anything they wish under the name of academic freedom: instead it assumes that all its members are committed to social change. To give an example, a course in riot control would simply be declared out of place in such a university, while a course in methods of rioting might be perfectly appropriate.

How much longer can non-Leninist, non-Marxist, non-Communist academics continue to ignore this jihad within the university, against truth, knowledge, and the fundamental ideas of academic freedom? Doing his best to establish a system of Marxist "adversarial education," as Professor Balch and London call it, former professor of French literature at Yale now at Duke University, Frederic Jameson writes:

> To create a Marxist culture in this country, to make Marxism an unavoidable presence and a distinct, original, and unmistakable voice in American social, cultural, and intellectual life, in short to form a Marxist intelligentsia for the struggles of the future—this seems to me the supreme mission of a Marxist pedagogy and a radical intellectual life today.

Nobody would suggest that the majority of American academics are radicalized Marxists. But the non-Marxified academicians are doing little to resist a widespread and relentless Marxification which seeks to subvert our academic institutions. Sidney Hook writes, "The enforcement of the academic ethic must rest with the faculties themselves."

At a recent convention of the American Political Science Association in Chicago, the Marxist-Leninist Michael Parenti extolled the superiority of Soviet trade unions over the U.S. variant. There was nothing remarkable in Parenti's pro-Soviet position; he is as candid about his Stalinism as Angela Davis is about hers. What was remarkable is that the non-Stalinist members of the panel, all distinguished academics, plus the audience of several hundred political scientists listened to Parenti's propaganda without a murmur. Had another speaker suggested, say, that trade unions in South Africa (which actually do exist) were superior to those of the United States, let alone to those of the Soviet Union, he would have been booed off the platform as an extremist, and the panel would have led the booing.

Perhaps the political scientists who allowed this Marxist-Leninist schlock to pass unchallenged at a scholarly meeting believed that the Marxist academics are losing the battle everywhere and needed no rebuttal. Unfortunately, while the Marxist academics may (debatably) be losing in the world beyond the academy, they are most definitely not losing their war to establish a Marxist infrastructure in the social sciences and the humanities.

Moreover, the Marxist academics are today's power elite in the universities, and by the magic of the tenure system they have become self-perpetuating. Instead of a proletariat to be liberated, we today have a professoriat which has already freed itself from the academic mandate. It has also successfully substituted Marxist social change as the goal of learning, instead of a search for objective truth. The influence of the Marxist professoriat and their New Campus Politics extends to other sectors of the "New Class": opinion leaders and institutions, the radio and television networks, and the prestige press. In the face of such domination the life of the anti-Marxist or conservative faculty member without tenure is Hobbesian: "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short."

Among the social scientists first to recognize the intrusion of

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the "adversary" culture into the university was Dr. Evron M. Kirkpatrick, former director of the American Political Science Association. He summarized the position of the left arrayed against contemporary political science by saying that the "new critics" were taking for granted that nonleft political scientists had accepted "the false gods of reason, objectivity and freedom." The nonleft political scientists were condemned by the New Campus Politicians "for making understanding, not action, the goal." As far as Kirkpatrick was concerned, the "new critics" were opposed to "scholarly inquiry."

Professor Bertell Ollman of New York University's Institute of Marxist Studies is quite correct in saying that "[a] Marxist cultural revolution is taking place today in American universities. More and more students and faculty are being introduced to Marx's interpretation of how capitalism works. . . . It is a peaceful and democratic revolution, fought chiefly by books and lectures." The field of American history, says Professor John P. Diggins, "has come to be dominated by Marxists and feminists. . . . What killed liberal historiography, whether political, intellectual or diplomatic was Marxism."

At Harvard we have a strange situation. Professor John Womack, chairman of the university's history department, has said publicly, "In politics as I was ten years ago, so I remain—a Communist. This keeps me busy." Harvard President Derek Bok said Womack's political loyalties didn't trouble him so long as Womack didn't "seek to indoctrinate his students." This would be fine in a world where the left played fair, but how can indoctrination be avoided when the index of taboo subjects is added to almost daily?

It was not so long ago that Harvard Professor James Q. Wilson was arguing that what passes for a liberal education today is inconsistent with liberalism and its traditional values: civility, free speech, equality of opportunity, and "the maintenance of a realm of privacy and intimacy from the constant assaults of the political and the societal." Writing in 1972, Wilson said:

> In the last two or three years, the list of subjects that cannot be publicly discussed there [at Harvard] in a free and open forum has grown steadily, and now includes the war in Viet Nam, public policy toward urban ghettos, the relationship between intelligence and heredity, and the role of American corporations in certain overseas regimes . . . to be specific: a spokesman for South Viet Nam, a critic of liberal policies toward the ghettos, a scientist who claimed that intelligence is largely inherited and a corporate executive who denied that his firm was morally responsible for the regime in South Africa have all been harassed and in some cases forcibly denied an opportunity to speak.

In May 1987, Asst. Professor Randall Kennedy of Harvard Law School defended a student blockade which prevented a South African diplomat from speaking on the campus by saying that "Toleration has its limits." Professor Kennedy, who is a board member of the Massachusetts Civil Liberties Union and a black, was asked how he would respond if a lecturer he didn't like was beaten or killed during a protest. He replied: "It's a close call, something I'd have to think deeply about."

In the 1950's, the New School of Social Research graduate faculty and the general faculty adopted a statement which they probably would not adopt today:

> The New School knows that no man can teach well nor should he be permitted to teach at all unless he is prepared "to follow the truth of scholarship wherever it may lead." No inquiry is ever to be made whether a lecturer's private views are conservative, liberal, or radical, orthodox or agnostic: views of the aristocrat or commoner. Jealously safeguarding this precious principle, the New School strictly affirms that a member of any political party or group which asserts the right to dictate in matters of science or scientific opinion is not free to teach the truth and thereby is disqualified as a teacher.

The attempt to endow the American university with a corporate identity has succeeded beyond the wildest dreams of its fomenters. The mutation of the academy has been going on openly for a long time, with little opposition to those who are transforming it into Marxist revolutionary theater. John Kenneth Galbraith was boasting almost 20 years ago that "it was the universities . . . which led the opposition to the Vietnam war, which forced the retirement of President Johnson, which are leading the battle against the great corporations on the issue of pollution, and which at the last Congressional elections retired a score or more of the most egregious time-servers, military sycophants and hawks."

How did this coup against the traditions of the university begin, and why has Marxism become the driving motor of this coup? At a time when Marxism has over and over again demonstrated its failures on every level in the U.S. and British social sciences, it is more influential than ever.

The Marxist professoriat has reached its pinnacle of power particularly in the social sciences—the willingness of modernist intellectuals to serve the interests of power that promises drastic societal change is both a long and an old story. A.J.P. Taylor described the revolutionaries of 1848 as those who believed in "movement: therefore only those elements who desired change were democratic [and] since movement and democracy were synonymous, only those who desired socialism were the people."

But there were later intellectuals, in the 1920's, who found reaction and the early fascism congenial because like socialism, fascist doctrines seemed to afford an opportunity for them to establish their preeminence as custodians of morals and culture. The antidemocratic nature of these doctrines made them particularly appealing to an extraordinary number of leading artists and writers. In the U.S., there was a surprising degree of support for Italian fascism among American intellectuals. *The New Republic* in the late 1920's was urging "a sympathetic hearing" for Italian fascism because it promoted

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"national cohesion and national welfare." As it later waffled on Stalinist terror, *TNR* even justified fascist violence as a necessary means to end internal strife and disunity.

What we have seen in this half-century is not only a crisis of authority but a crisis of authority in relation to mind and "the right exercise of its mental powers," as Lionel Trilling put it. The power of the university is such that academic "Freudo-Marxist" left has contributed to the alteration of perceptions and ideas of opinion-makers — there has almost been a Marxist fellow traveler takeover of our powerful media institutions. The print and airwaves are replete with double standard judgments on sociopolitical issues of the day.

In recent years former U.S. Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick has talked a good deal about the concept of "moral equivalence." This concept seeks to prove that both superpowers are equally guilty, immoral, and ominous, both scorpions in a bottle. Unfortunately, "moral equivalence" is a rhetorical device to demonstrate the moral superiority of the Soviet Union over the United States: What the U.S. does is unforgivable; what the USSR does is understandable.

George Orwell noted this double standard among British "pacifists" at the end of World War II:

> Pacifist propaganda usually boils down to saying that one side is as bad as the other, but if one looks closely at the writings of the younger intellectual pacifists, one finds that they do not by any means express impartial disapproval but are directed almost entirely against Britain and the United States.

Contemporary examples of the double standard are numberless:

* When Nicaragua's Daniel Ortega buys several dozen eyeglasses on a visit to New York, the media treats it as a venial oddity. But when it is learned that the Marcos family stored vast quantities of shoes, furs, jewels, perfumes, and other baubles, it is regarded as a mortal sin. We can assume that the Marcoses looted the Filipino treasury. Has anybody checked to see who pays for Ortega's and his wife's purchases?

* The U.S. is always, so goes the cliché, propping up unpopular dictators. The Soviets never prop up unpopular dictators whether in Afghanistan, Angola, Mozambique, or Nicaragua. It is certain that General Jaruzelski could not win an honest election in Poland. He is most assuredly being propped up by the Soviet Union, yet to accuse the USSR of such a transgression is to interfere in the internal affairs of the Polish people.

* Oliver Tambo, apostle of violent revolution, ally and stipendiary of the Soviet Union, is a left culture hero, but Jonas Savimbi is a Western stooge. Why Castro, "si," Pinochet, "no"?

* Nobody ever emerges from Chile, South Africa, or South Korea with hope for the existing government and its "reform" program. People are always coming back from the USSR or Poland touting their reform programs. Soviet leaders are always becoming more enlightened. Afrikaner leaders are always becoming more benighted.

* Fidel Castro has the respect of men like Senators Dodd and Weicker even if there are no elections in Cuba. But Napoleon Duarte is suspected of rigging El Salvador's election even though the impartial observers declared it was a fair election. There were predictions of a small vote because the Salvadorans would be intimidated into *not* voting. But there was an unexpectedly large turnout; naturally, the people were intimidated by the military and *forced* to vote. There hasn't been an honest election in any Communist country from the day of takeover, but only in El Salvador or South Korea is there an election problem.

* If the United States brings evidence of the use of chemical or biological warfare against the people of Laos, Kampuchea, or Afghanistan, it is disbelieved. However, when the Soviet Union accused the U.S. of introducing AIDS as part of biological warfare, Dan Rather, on 30 March 1987, played this smear as news but offered no evidence. Soviet disinformation was all the evidence he needed.

SURVEY

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SEVENTY YEARS AFTER THE REVOLUTION:

HAS THE SOVIET SYSTEM SATISFIED THE SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC RIGHTS OF THE SOVIET PEOPLE?

Guest Editor of the issue: G. R. Urban

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* Under the Brezhnev Doctrine, all Communist countries are off limits to any Western democratic influences. However, under the doctrine of Marxism-Leninism, the West and non-Marxist Third World are a free-fire zone for Soviet penetration and subversion.

* Why are "wars of national liberation" or "liberation" movements only legitimate against non-Marxist countries and illegitimate and counterrevolutionary if directed against Soviet colonies? A liberation movement in Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, or Poland, or by Kazakhs or Uzbeks is illegitimate, but the Moscow-Cuba-Nicaragua Axis can marshal significant U.N. support on freedom for Puerto Rico.

* Senator Alan Cranston and other Congressmen insist that no aid be given to El Salvador until the government starts to negotiate with the Communist guerrillas. Nothing is heard about stopping aid to Poland unless General Jaruzelski starts to negotiate with Lech Walesa and Solidarity. The El Salvador Communist guerrillas are legitimate for Cranston and his allies because they have the support of the Marxist-Leninists. The contras in Nicaragua have no such legitimacy because they are fighting Marxist-Leninists. Imprisonment of Communist guerrillas in El Salvador is a violation of human rights, while jailing or killing Nicaraguan anti-Communists or sentencing critics of Castro's dictatorship to 20 years in solitary is protecting a constitutional regime.

* To call capitalism "the focus of evil in the modern world" would be sound Marxist analysis to be heard on any American campus. But similarly to characterize Communism demonstrates political irresponsibility and a desire for an imperialist war.

* Why do "death squads" always signify right-wing terrorists and "junta" right-wing militarists? Are there no left-wing "death squads" or left-wing juntas?

* How come Marxist academics who claim they aren't Communists always support Soviet foreign policy and are always against U.S. foreign policy? To cast doubt on Soviet good faith is to be a cold warrior; to cast doubt on U.S. good faith is understandable realism. If a summit is on the horizon, criticism of the Soviet Union for whatever reason means opposition to the summit. Criticism of the U.S., however, means support for a summit.

* It is easy to ignore an open letter by 30 Soviet scientists and physicists now in the West who say the USSR is researching Star Wars; after all, they're disaffected émigrés, and how would they know what's going on back in Russia? However, the writings of any ex-CIA officer, like Philip Agee, are always credible. The mere accusation of alleged CIA wrongdoing, as in Bob Woodward's latest book, is probative evidence of guilt.

* The Soviet Union can, it seems, do anything: from shooting down a passenger airliner to using napalm or biological warfare against the Afghan freedom-fighters. Whatever the atrocity, an immediate cry for understanding is heard in the West—"You know the Russians are paranoid about their borders" or "it was an act of self-defense" or "the CIA was involved, you know." However, the U.S. has no right to be paranoid about its borders, especially the Rio Grande, and it certainly has no right of self-defense. When the U.S. bombs Libya or successfully invades Grenada, we are bullies, terrorists, imperialists, fascists, militarists, and warmongers. The inhabitants of the Kremlin are paranoid: that's why they had to build the Berlin Wall. But that's life among the paranoiacs.

* Reports of Soviet massacres in Afghanistan are, to the left, always false because the American media does not assign permanent correspondents or camera crews to the battleground. So the atrocities don't exist because the reports come from Afghan refugees who have no film anyway. On the other hand, reports of atrocities by Nicaraguan contras are always true because correspondents and camera crews are permanently assigned to the Sandinistas.

* No socialist country enjoys academic freedom, for Marxism-Leninism precludes it. So where, as far as the Marxist left is concerned, is academic freedom endangered?: in the United States, the only country in the world which allows academic freedom to be used to subvert academic freedom. How many faculty protests were organized after a PEN Congress announced that the Soviet Union, Vietnam, and Turkey are the three countries with the highest number of writers or journalists in prison or some form of detention?

* Why are feminists as desperate about the allegedly low status of women in our society as they are opposed to U.S. foreign policy, so unconcerned about the status of women in socialist societies, especially in the Soviet Union? How many women are there in Communist politburos?

* Why is it that when we argue with Third World intellectuals and their Western Marxist admirers on behalf of democracy, as enshrined in the Bill of Rights or the Rights of Man or the British constitutional order or the efficiency of the free market, we are told that we should not try to impose on Asian, Latin, or African peoples our Western political culture because it is alien to their values? Yet it is perfectly proper to hawk Marxism in the Third World, though Marx is as much in the tradition of Western philosophy and political theory as are Locke, Hume, Adam Smith, or James Madison.

How are we going to stop this Third Marxist Invasion of the American university? (The first wave began in the 1930's and continued through the mid-1950's; the second began in 1968 and intensified in the 1980's.) Academics of goodwill stood on the sidelines in spring 1968 and said the revolutionary whirlwind couldn't last and would blow itself out in a few days. They were wrong. As Professor Werner Dannhauser observed: "I am a political scientist and the safest generalization about the predictions of political scientists is that they are always wrong." The same, unfortunately, could be said of sociologists and other social scientists.

The least we can do is encourage associations like the University Center for Rational Alternatives and Accuracy in Academia to broaden their activities and to keep the spotlight on the enemies of academic freedom. We cannot expect the AAUP, the National Education Association, or even the professional organizations in the social sciences and the humanities to resist the Marxification process. They are trapped because any left extremist must be mantled by the ethics of academic freedom. In practice, however, this does not cover conservatives whose sociopolitical positions are defined by campus Marxists as racist, warmongering or counterrevolutionary. Academic freedom should not be a faculty comforter only; its principles should also benefit students.

Moreover, alumni associations must be brought into the campaign against the subversion of academic freedom. Obviously, alumni who provide revenue for their alma mater have a stake and an interest in their university. They must be kept

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informed.

The work of the Institute for Educational Affairs in subventioning and sponsoring pro-democratic and anti-Marxist campus newspapers is of crucial importance and should be encouraged and broadened. A dissident voice in the age of campus Marxist conformity is a *sine qua non* in beating back the Marxist tide.

Wherever possible, the dissident campus newspaper should be sent to the families of students so that the situation would be known to them. Wherever possible, a campus guide to faculty and courses should be published as an aid to incoming students in selecting their programs.

Studies of grading, particularly in graduate school departments, should be undertaken, with outside help if necessary, to see whether non-Marxist students are being penalized for opinions expressed in classroom work. Notes taken in class, syllabi, and reading lists should be analyzed and discussed by students to see if the teacher is using the classroom as a "bully pulpit."

If the university is a state institution, get in touch with state legislators and keep them informed. The dissident campus newspaper should be mailed to legislators.

Keep in touch with the local newspaper, television and radio stations and the reporters who normally cover campus affairs.

Run for campus offices.

Also, organize (with faculty help where possible) serious academic symposia on sociopolitical issues (e.g., homelessness in America, what to do about the Persian Gulf crisis, disinvestment in South Africa, supply-side economics, the 1988 presidential campaign). Try to get all sides and viewpoints represented. Watch for attempts to break up such meetings. Have a telecamera ready in case of trouble.

Inevitably many faculty members and the university administrations will be hostile to such campus reform movements. The cry of "invasion" of the classroom will be heard on the campus. University administrators, cowed by a powerful faculty, will rush to the rescue against the students seeking academic freedom. But what else is new?

ACADEMIC AFTERWORD: ON THE OCCASION OF MY RETIREMENT FROM THE ACADEMY *by Marion Montgomery*

In my institution I have been sharply critical of the public relations attempts at self-justification and self-elevation in the interest of the community's largess, the larger grants of public money to support a larger and larger institution. I have been particularly critical of my school's official insistence that its primary concern is with "new knowledge," a phrase I quote from our "Red Book," the official rules used to examine faculty for promotion. The effect of such a provincial understanding of knowledge has been an emphasis upon publication by our faculty and pressure for "innovation" in its teaching.

The fundamental necessity of knowing what men have said of this idea or this fact is either ignored or rejected by such a prescription for a university's relation to community. In the pressure that results, the faculty member struggles to survive by being innovative and original. He contributes to the flood of "research" that even large libraries equipped with the latest technology can no longer keep up with. Little wonder that a faculty member, whose own contribution is supposed to be made in the light of what has already been done, cannot know whether he has made an original contribution to "new" knowledge or not.

A colleague in philosophy tells me of a system designed in answer to these pressures for new knowledge, most difficult to discover in philosophy of all sciences. One submits his paper to a board of referees. If the paper is accepted, he is notified, and the paper is filed away. He has an official title of a "refereed" paper to add to his *vita* toward that fateful occasion when promotion is decided. But even under this system, he will have had a larger readership than many published pieces enjoy. I have seen a study that reports the number of readers of a published chemistry paper as 1.5. In chemistry, the number of research publications is so multitudinous that it has become impossible to know the extent of duplication in the field. The expected savior, the computer does what it can for those genuinely interested in the undetected duplications, but, for the most part, the illusion of a multiplication of new knowledge by faculty is maintained without question.

My criticism of the "publish or perish syndrome" baffles my antagonists, since I myself have published rather extensively and sometimes see evidence that I have as high as 2.5, even three readers, now that my children are older. I do not, of course, object to the publication of research papers or scholarly examination of the thought of Descartes or Heidegger. I applaud genuine "new knowledge," even as I remain confident that it is extremely rare in any academic field. My objection is to the perversion of words, and through them of minds, by forced publication. This mechanistic and statistical distortion of legitimate ends when applied to the young scholars, whereby they survive at what is an economic more than an intellectual level. Promotion committees depend largely upon the number of published pages, despite protests to the contrary, and upon a received opinion on the current prestige of the periodicals in which these pages appear. The validity of the words published receives little or no attention in the counsels of committee. Whether the words bear false witness or not gets lost in the procedural mechanisms.

What is more disturbing, because of its influence on

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intellectual health, is the effect upon the would-be teachers whose survival is determined at a Darwinian level. That many bear false witness is inevitable, even should witnessing count. Nor do I necessarily impute deliberate intellectual subversion, though young professors are like the rest of us—human and so capable of willful distortion. Intentionally or not, they put the word at risk. Very often a prematurity of mind results in the wrong use of words. It is with that recognition in mind that a colleague of mine, reflecting on the flood of academic publications, remarked that here, too, are "children having children."

These are certainly analogies between the biological and intellectual levels of community, in both of which the gifts of being are no longer generally valued. If pornography is viewed as a factor in the rate of teenage pregnancy and perhaps even in the violence of ordinary social affairs, surely it has tacit approval when community authority dissolves. There is, I suggest, a parallel pornographic industry in the undisciplined use of words, in this instance actually encouraged by academic authority.

New knowledge reveals its validity in the light of old knowledge held by an active mind. That mind casts a light backward to meet a light of mind cast forward by old knowledge, feeding the infant flame—the active mind—in the surrounding intellectual night. And any mind in any age is always struggling in that night. There is a symbiotic relation between old and new knowledge, lifting and feeding and bearing the growing intellect. In this respect we might say that ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny. The discrete intellectual body—this particular mind—is enlarged, advancing beyond itself. But see how easily one uses the wrong word? "Advancing beyond" has tempted me to imply an intellectual race, rather than a fulfillment of the mind's dance in creation. It is exactly such wavering in the academic authority which casts "new knowledge" in the role of programming an endless assembly line in the name of Progress. Thus academic authority invests "originality" with a glamor and value beyond its merits through an obsession with "new knowledge." That assembly line, in the daily round of community life, is a ratification of acceptable signs—the concrete consumer products. This is the world which we pretend to believe, with the help of a very active advertising industry, a crystal palace all compact of roses and the morning. But our restlessness gives advertising's "poetry" the lie, though its poetry is a far more demonic sort than Plato imagined. For it is, with deliberateness to deceive, an imitation of a decreed illusion, and not even a shadow of a shadow.

The structure of community is not that of an infinite collocation of shelves among which we wander, supplied by that factory we call the academy, with its "new knowledge." Current pressures upon the academy would make it precisely and only this. But our restlessness suggests that life itself is not an action of desperate pursuit of illusions posited as reality, to be encountered as we turn into the next aisle. The perfect machine with its attendant warehouse and outlets is not a suitable symbol for either personhood or community, though such a symbol has its effective uses in the control of persons and communities by the lords of power.

We may discover the truth about such illusions, only if we can determine the validity of new knowledge about the truth of things. That is why it is crucial to recover what Dorothy Sayers calls the "Lost Tools of Learning." It is obvious that tools are needed so that we may excavate the site where community collapsed, burying its mind. What is needed is a recovery of known but forgotten truths. In a philosophy department, the teacher who knows what men have said of virtue and all its complexities is far more important to the intellectual health of the student than one who labors at situation ethics from an *ad hoc* present, thereby encouraging his student to regard his own whims and twitches of mind as sound thought. This is a specific instance of intellectual pornography very popular in the academy for a number of years now. But it is only that professor who knows old virtues, who knows what men have said of virtue since saying began, who can see clearly the possible truth or probable falseness in situation ethics. The adolescent intellectual, whether full professor or freshman, is at last capable only of thought at an adolescent level. In one way or another he will be one of those "children having children," most of which offspring are destined to perish in the righteousness of time.

Old knowledge, depending upon our familiarity with it, will be dismissed as cliché, especially if we let old things pass, like Chaucer's fat monk, who was given to the new world about him, of fine horses and fat roasted swans. But there are clichés and clichés. Once upon a time I spent much energy trying to demonstrate the meaning of cliché to my freshman theme writers. In our text, a Thanksgiving "groaning table" was said to be improperly described because the metaphor was worn out. But my freshmen had never encountered "groaning board" before. It was as fresh to them as any other poetic device, poetry having been largely killed in them. A metaphor appears worn out only after we have encountered it too often, like the "long moment," so misused in hundreds of short stories and novels.

In my attempt to rescue cliché, I have no brief for "groaning table" or "a long moment," though they might be effective as satire or irony. What I would have us do, however, is to recognize and distinguish among so-called clichés. Some are not only valid but crucial, however much used and abused. What is more worn than "two plus two equals four"? The

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phrase $E=MC^2$ is also rapidly becoming tedious. The grammar of knowledge—old or new—is by its nature inevitably cliché since it formulates an elementary ground which we must share in order to encounter the truth of things. It is only when such elementary formulation may be assumed in our conversation that we are free to move beyond the seeming deadness of grammar, the weariness of the elementary. And the desire to move beyond the elementary itself requires our constant reexamination of the grammar of our conversation, since we so easily mistake or confuse that ground. If we fail to be committed to the elementary, we will find ourselves as community in a panic moment such as the current one. Our cry will be, "back to the basics."

The elementary ground, the grammar of knowledge, which we are likely to condescend to insofar as we take ourselves to be sophisticated, is more tolerable to the very young. For them, all the world is new, including very old words with buried histories. The literal surface of "Little Jack Horner" is a portrait of a seemingly inoffensive little fellow, quietly feasting. He is safe, just beyond the adult world, in which he would not be tolerated to fish in his plum pie. The story is quietly seductive in its music and in the teasing rhyme, and in the situation itself. As we grow older, we begin to wonder why Jack is in the corner and just what beyond the literal fruit may be meant by "plum," since there is little reason for self-congratulation in finding a plum in a plum pie. Thus we may later rescue, or rationalize, our childhood delight by finding possible historical implications. It has been suggested, for instance, that the name is a historical one; Thomas Horner, stewart to Abbot Richard Whiting at Glastonbury Cathedral, was sent to Henry VIII with a pie in which was secreted deeds to 12 manorial estates. Horner, the tale says, took out the deed to the Manor of Mells, where his family has lived ever since. Abbot Whiting, with Horner on the jury, was convicted of hiding sacramental cups from the King's greed and was hanged, beheaded, and quartered. Or so claims Baring-Gould in his *Annotated Mother Goose*. Our child's delight advances to adult delight: The irony that Horner sat on the Abbot's jury seems less history than art; the historical date seems off, more likely to have been in the reign of Henry's father (Henry VII) than that of his more colorful son. There seems to have been some tampering. Here is a play in the making, caught in a nursery music with teasing overtone. That elementary ground to the basics of education, the grammar of knowledge, is here. Or consider the music of "Hickety pickety, my black hen," in itself an immediate delight; but it is a larger preparation as well, we discover, when we happen at last upon something like A.E. Robinson's line "Miniver Cheevy, child of scorn." The line echoes in its syncopation that older music out of the childhood of our language, out of the time of the Tudors; it becomes an effective signal that Robinson's whole poem is built out of clichés. In mimicking Miniver's arrested development, his refusal to accommodate old and new knowledge, Robinson makes a commentary on our humanity that enters the rational mind through the imaginative mind. Our response to Robinson, then, is a stage in our education that has been underway long before we encounter the poem itself.

Education in its preliminaries, then, is the labor of acquiring necessary clichés. In its advanced concerns, education is the assaying of cliché. For the cliché is a common coinage whose true value is obscured by the residue of frequent handling and abuse. All language suffers such wear and distortion. But the mystery of language is that the validity of words, insofar as they are precisely oriented to reality, are never absolutely destroyed by use and abuse. A word may be mis-taken and so mis-spent because not fully assayed. It will nevertheless carry within it what it has to say about the truth of things. Aside from its intrinsic value, of course, a word may pass as coinage of quite another value, through general assent. Thus, if I should suddenly proclaim the virtue of *prejudice*, given the present surfaces of the words as we spend it most recklessly, I would ruffle sophisticated feathers. Then I should have to explain, by recourse to the depths of the word, that it involves prejudgment and that we live our lives out of acts of prejudice that are perfectly justified by judgment. It is such prejudice that makes me drive on the right side of the road or cross under a green light. It is such prejudice that makes it possible for me to set aside worry as to whether the stairs will be there when we leave this place. It is such prejudice that makes me more or less confident of my bank account or of tomorrow's sun. Without sound prejudice to depend upon, I should have to begin every moment of my conscious life as if there had been no moment of my life before this moment.

We use words, sometimes, at the face value they seem currently to have, not so much recognizing their value as recognizing the smudges given them by current transactions with them. Thus meanings accumulate in dictionary incarcerations of the word, bearing in such history the evidence of shifting prejudices, often evidence of a slippage between the signification and the signified. There is present, for instance, in the entry in the New English dictionary on the word *imagination* a complex history of our understanding of man's place in the world and the role man plays as maker in the world, from the medieval understanding of the thing signified by the term *imagination* down to our own uses of this much worn coin. In freeing such a word from its present limits, seeing its full life in relation to mind, we discover in that word a more fascinating complexity, though much more may be revealed to us than we are prepared to accept. This is to say that we grow out of ignorance, out of adolescence of mind, sometimes in proportion to our exploration of old knowledge, our recovery of subsurfaces in the clichés we so randomly spend. Let me illustrate the point by personal witness.

When I have 30 sophomores in a literary survey course write a paper comparing the opening lines of Sidney Lanier's "Marshes of Glynn" with the opening lines of Poe's "Ulalume," my primary purpose is to make sure each one understands what is meant by "imagery" in relation to words. I do so with the knowledge of experience which tells me that *imagery* is a green term to them, though they have heard it spoken of. It is in some respects an attempt as futile as convincing them that "groaning table" is a cliché, though it is a far more necessary task in its consequences to the growth of their minds. I am always arrested by the consequences of exercise. First off, there is a vocabulary common to a given class, out of their immediate encounter with the world which differs from mine, though we are in the world at a coincident time. Theirs includes, for instance, the latest pop music and movies and television shows. Just as there is a common popularity in the naming of infants, influenced by current fascinations (read the birth announcements in the "Family Section" of the Sunday paper), so is there a more general

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vocabulary among those babies as they come into their language. We have come through the Shirleys and Scarlets and Jennifers. Next semester's roll will say what we have come to. But their papers will no doubt still be full of "in my opinions," our moment of history having so heavily emphasized as if a fundamental truth that, in a society of the autonomous (as opposed to a community of the dependent), every mind's opinion has the same validity as any other mind's.

What I then go on to point out to my students is that, though they use much the same vocabulary and are restricted by the assignment to examine precisely the same two texts, each of the 30-odd papers is unique. Each is, more or less precisely, a revelation of the mind using those common words. Short of plagiarism, no two papers are the same, though the problem each addresses is the same and the evidence to solve it is the same. Nothing is likely to bring home the point that this range of difference reveals levels of personal accomplishment so much as to read aloud a good paper and a bad one. The conditions—the limits of the papers—are rather commonly perceived by the exercise itself. Those students who accept one tennis player as superior to another, having accepted the lines of the court and the rules of play, sometimes begin to see that similar distinctions are possible even in intellectual "games."

But what I am most concerned to reveal to the individual student is that, beyond these dissimilarities in native gifts of intellect and habits of diligence, there is a recognizable presence of his own mind in the paper. There he may begin to discover the limits of his own gift. Since those limits are not yet arrived at, within the recognition lies incentive and direction to a development, insofar as he will take up the point. Incidentally, he notices a conspicuous dissimilarity in the imagery used by Poe and by Lanier. He sees a common world separately taken through a common language by the two minds. He begins to discover the presence of a distinctly discrete mind in common language. And at last, if grace allow, he begins to discover a collocation of several minds in the words he takes to be his very own as he writes his name and date on the paper in expectation of my judgment of him. There really is, then, a community of minds within the words he has set down, though he has set them down in such a way that they are as distinctly his words as the handwriting is distinctly his.

We go on from there to talk about the particular presence of Poe in his words, of Lanier in his. We may discover, by the end of the course, that having read a poem identified as by Robert Frost, one may take up an anonymous poem and discover it also written by Frost, or by someone imitating Frost. Individual papers identifying accurately Frost as the poet of the anonymous poem nevertheless vary considerably in the authority with which each student shows the point, a consideration which makes professional judgment a requirement. One does at last have to say that this is an A paper and this is a C paper, even though each paper may have named the right poet. For, in addition to the fundamental concern of leading each mind to occupy its potential with authority, students' authority differs in degree as does teachers' authority. As some poems are better than others, though all are poems, some minds are better than others, though all are minds. Both the teacher and the student have a double responsibility: to the individual mind in its potential; to the community mind in its necessities. What is confusing, given our world's distortions of both judgment and the ends suitable to intellect, is a mistaking of *moral* judgment as implied in the student's A or C, a point I shall return to.

Out of such exercise the point will have been made that mind is responsible both to and for words—it leaves marks on the words it uses for good or ill. In judging and in signing one's judgment, the only moral danger to the student lies in his not discovering and accepting and working with the gifts that make him a discrete person. It is not easy to bring a student to celebrate his C in these days, when most have unexamined A's and B's, anymore than it is easy to be certain beyond hesitation that one's own judgment as teacher in these matters is valid. One professes with a constantly justified—that is, re-examined—authority, but one must profess. And the inescapable ground of profession is a confidence that words well spent reveal the educated mind: that is, an active mind engaging active minds is the context of any labor suitably called "education."

The importance of such student exercises in my view, then, is to make clear to the growing student mind the importance of seeing and identifying and judging the various fingerprints that cling to this coin of the realm, that cling to words. To do so is to discover the multiplying presences that gather in words, the minds in one's words as potentially infinite as angels on a pin head. For here we are on the border of a mystery in words: In the words lies the focus of community, a community independent of time and inhabiting the house of language. In words are such presences that in a very real and not fanciful way we become members of a company of minds. And here I mean *company*, not in its commercial sense, but in that sense we mean when we announce to our household, "company is coming." There follows from such an announcement a cleaning and ordering of the house so that we may receive that company. That is what significant education must be most concerned with, the cleaning and ordering of the head and heart, into which place may come a various company indeed. Homer and Plato; Sir Isaac Newton and Albert Einstein; the Saturday politician and the Sunday priest. The list of invited and uninvited guests goes on and on. Among the marvels is that any invited guest happily attends. The danger is that uninvited guests may. And in a disorderly house, the disorderly guest is safest from detection.

In either instance, then, the authority is, and it should properly be, that of the host or hostess of heart and mind, the particular consciousness issuing invitations or leaving the door ajar for the surreptitious interloper. If we, through neglect of our own house, make it equally available to whatever guest would enter, many strange and curious presences will attend, some settling down to a parasitic existence which if unnoticed and uncorrected may eventually dislodge the host. For though ideas have consequences and enter mind through words and are sent forth from the mind in words to wander in the world, those consequences may be either good or bad. For there are bad and good ideas no less than good and bad intentions. The consequences are upon the life of the individual mind and subsequently upon the community of mind. Even welcomed guests may bring unwelcomed ideas into the mind. That is a point I make by caveat against Plato's argument of the inevitable good to the particular soul from its education, and it returns us to our confusion of a well-ordered intellect as certifying moral virtue. The enlightened mind, our Plato seems to believe, must be consequently a good mind, and evil a matter of ignorance rather than of willfulness.

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That is why, in resisting that idealistic view of the mind and its education, I have insisted that an educator can only teach what seems known about the truth of things; what men have said of virtue one may teach, but it will not follow that the student will therefore become virtuous, even when he makes an A in the course. As each citizen of community must be responsible for his peculiar gifts so that he may become an ordinate member of community, so—and even more so, in the nature of his gifts—must the student be responsible for the ordering of mind and heart; he *must* be, so that he may receive wisely and well those guests both invited and uninvited who are eager and more than eager to attend him. Education is the preparing of the mind for the presence of our common inheritance, the accumulated and accumulating knowledge of the truth of things. Each according to his gifts, but each with a responsibility for those gifts. It is from this point of understanding of the means of education that one may the more ordinately embark in a final journey to ends, into the country of moral concern.

A REPORT ON THE WARFARE USED AGAINST LANGUAGE CRITICS *by Leonard Moskovit*

A few years ago when I read *Grammar and Good Taste* by Dennis E. Baron, I was surprised by the contempt with which the author, a linguist teaching at a university, spoke of language critics. I was aware, of course, of the ritual cursing of traditional grammar and grammarians by some writers of introductory books about modern grammar, but such outbursts usually appear only in the first chapter before strange diagrams proliferate. Baron's animus, however, was expressed throughout his book. It seems to me that Baron, besides displaying an unfriendly attitude, gave an inaccurate picture of Edwin Newman (*Strictly Speaking*, *A Civil Tongue*), and that his treatment of other language critics was therefore suspect. Curious, I went ahead then to read most of the modern language critics and most of those who attacked them. (The attackers are chiefly professional linguists or people with some advanced training in linguistics.)

In the early days of my reading, I entertained the hope of weighing the merits of the two opposing sides, the strict critics on the one and the loose linguists on the other; of summing up virtues and vices; and of finally handing down my objective and well-reasoned decision, from which none could possibly dissent. Further reading undermined my hope and taught me that philosophies of both language and life were involved and that I was unlikely to reach a compelling decision.

I found that the language critics generally ignore their opponents, except for a sneer at structural or descriptive linguists who supposedly believe that anything goes in speaking and writing. The linguists, however, seemed much taken with purist-bashing. There are two books, one by Harvey A. Daniels and one by Jim Quinn, chiefly devoted to attacks on language critics; and, as one might expect, there are numerous articles and reviews in the same vein.

Immediately noticeable is how the linguists, most of them scholarly gentlemen or gentlewomen, call the language critics bad names. Some of their locutions seem to be preprinted labels. Often language critics are called "self-appointed guardians of the English language" (a phrase pleasing to Baron and to Daniels). Would the linguists prefer that critics be appointed by the government? And who appointed these scourges of the so-called purists? The flippant term "pop grammarian" was introduced by Quinn and then picked up by other writers. Baron calls language critics not only "self-appointed guardians" and "pop grammarians" but also "diehards," "hard-core prescriptivists," and "vigilantes." Even the two fairest linguists can't quite restrain themselves: Edward Finegan comes out with an occasional "language or grammatical guardian" and even "guru"; and Dwight Bolinger, while granting some value to language critics, classifies them as "shamans" who stimulate fear so that they will be called in to allay it.

Some may regard these terms as more witty than nasty. But what about Quinn's use of "faddish know-nothings," "petty nuisances," "linguistic barbarians," "professional busybodies," and "yahoos"? Quinn thinks Newman's books are successful because "the attitude of our society to language is just as intolerant, uninformed, prejudiced, and dumb." Quinn, the self-proclaimed populist, means that the people's attitude is as bad as that expressed in Newman's books. (Quinn is not exactly a classy writer, a fact which is not hard to understand given his antipathy toward choiceness of language.) Showing

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that an academic can be just as wicked an infighter as the journalist, Ronald R. Butters, editor of *American Speech*, is pleased to denounce "the inanities of such know-nothing 'pop grammarians' as Edwin Newman, Theodore Bernstein, Wilson Follett, and especially that vitriolic, sophomoric poseur, John Simon."

Also noticeable from this quotation is more than a hint of the special hatred linguists feel toward John Simon. Daniels calls him "poisonous," as do other linguists, so that "the poisonous Simon" stands in the order of "the wily Odysseus." Some linguists seem eager to remind us that Simon is foreign born, in Yugoslavia, and that, despite being educated as a boy in England and later in the United States, and receiving a Ph.D. from Harvard, he still speaks—or so they claim—with a foreign accent (Daniels). His not being native born explains, for some linguists at least, his supposed lapses in idiom and his conservative attitude toward language change. The honor roll of those exploiting this new and easy principle of argument includes Finegan and Quinn. A twist is added by Wallace W. Douglas, who opines that all is explained by Simon's graduate education: "Except for the late Bergen Evans, I've never known a Harvard PhD in English, even from the old philological days, who knew beans about his own language."

Because he has argued against the elimination of so-called sexist language, Simon receives a lot of attention from the linguist Julia Penelope (formerly Julia Stanley), whose recent published work on sexist language often seems to rely on anger for argument. In one article she fills five printed pages with vituperation against Simon, but somehow never gets around to examining his basic views of language and the reasoning behind his conclusions. To her it is enough to say that Simon is antifeminist and has "castigated" the National Council of Teachers of English and the Conference on College Composition and Communication for their "egalitarian frenzy." He has even gone so far as to show, on one occasion, a lack of deference to "serious students of the English language like Dwight Bolinger." "In short," she writes, "Simon is a man whose ignorance is exceeded only by his arrogance." Not a bad sentence; but then she adds the reference to Simon's native language not being English.

All this blends with another bad intellectual habit of the linguists—the attribution of base motives and mean values to an opponent and the concomitant neglect of rational argument. Here, the linguists speak as one. They seem to base their opinions mainly on Charles Carpenter Fries's 1940 identification of standard English as the dialect of educated professionals, that is, as merely social habit or insignia of class. But later writers such as Robert A. Hall Jr., Daniels, and Quinn go beyond Fries's conception to indulge in populism; they denounce language critics for being undemocratic, elitist, snobbish, discriminatory, intent on maintaining class distinctions, mean-minded, and self-seeking. Language critics supposedly criticize certain locutions, not because they have any objective grounds, but because their personalities are warped.

With the exception, however, of Julia Penelope, linguists do at times offer some sound arguments to expose weaknesses in the language critics' position. Relying usually on intuition based on their long experience, language critics sometimes do make errors that a little research could have corrected. Still, the linguists, priding themselves on their objective knowledge of language, often abandon themselves to subjectivity when showing up the language critics by neglecting the ordinary standards of evidence. Hall, who excoriates language critics and insists that Americans have been made insecure about their ability to speak and to write, cites no language critic and supplies no evidence. Customarily, Quinn's evidence consists of isolated sentences from the *Oxford English Dictionary*, but he never tells the reader the precise section number in an entry for a word; as a result, to check his claims, one has to search through page after page of long entries, an especially blinding task for those of us who use the compact edition of the *OED*. Although he is commenting on American English and although he reproaches the language critics for not using dictionaries, he himself never refers to *Webster's New International Unabridged* (2nd or 3rd edition), *The Dictionary of American English* (1938-1944), or *A Dictionary of Americanisms* (1951). At one point he laughs at Simon the traditionalist for using the latest educational jargon; perhaps, he slyly suggests, Simon's use of the vogue word *audit* (as in "to audit a course") will appear as an example in the next supplement to the *OED*. But if Quinn had been able to close his favorite, the *OED*, and open a copy of *Webster's Second*, he would have discovered an entry for *audit*, presumably evidence that the word has been around for some 50 years.

Daniels, a professor of education with training in linguistics, also has rather careless ways of supplying evidence. In his third chapter, a historical survey of writers through the ages who have worried about the decline of language, only 16 references are from the text of the writer, while 61 are "cited by so-and-so." Not only is Daniels probably unaware of the contexts of his brief quotations, he also makes it difficult for his readers to understand these contexts. So taken is Daniels by a Sumerian teacher of "writing" who complained 4,500 years ago about the poor ability of his students that he chortles over this several times. But he himself admits that the Sumerian's complaint was about scribesmanship, or what we would call handwriting. Why chortle?

Even plain errors are frequent in some of these books, articles, and reviews by linguists. In a review of Quinn's book, Butters gives Cornelia Evans the new first name of Candice. On a single page of a review article, Douglas renames Copperud (the language critic) Copperman (a critic of education) and uses the word *stigmata* as "honorable insignia." Besides referring to the *OED* as a prescriptive rather than a descriptive dictionary, Quinn, berating Newman, reveals his belief that the following are derivatives, formed by adding *-ize* to the first morpheme of the word: *realize* (which was actually borrowed from the French *réaliser*); *baptize* (from the Greek *baptizein*); and *capsize* (which is of unknown origin, but probably not a derivative, since no one has ever discovered an entity called a *caps* to which *ize* could be added). At times Daniels implies that Arn and Charlene Tibbetts' book was really written by one person. He believes that the two books published in 1870 and 1880 by Richard Grant White lack "linguistic sophistication" and that White was stupid to claim that English has no grammar, when all that White—like Sir Philip Sidney—meant was that English is not an inflected language like Latin or Greek. Baron, in his condemnation of Simon's book, claims that Simon mentions no language critics writing before 1966; actually, Simon cites Eric Partridge and H.W. Fowler a total of nine times. All this fudging and fumbling suggests that attacking language critics temporarily

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obscures the judgment of some linguists.

Even more important, some major arguments employed by the linguists show deep weaknesses at closer examination. For example, linguists often attempt to refute a language critic's condemnation of a locution by pointing out that it has a long history of use in the language. If Simon condemns the use of the pronoun form *I* when it functions as an object (as in *to him and I*), then Charles Suhor, Deputy Executive Director of the NCTE, refutes Simon's opinion by referring to "the thoroughly respectable history of that usage, easily found in the *Oxford English Dictionary*, among other places." (Unfortunately, the entry for *I*, section B.I.2, in the *OED* does not support Suhor.) Quinn more than once quotes Shakespeare's "All debts are cleared between you and I." *Like* used as a conjunction instead of *as* is uniformly defended by citing its use by Shakespeare or Keats. Double or multiple negatives are defended by quotation from Chaucer. Quinn also supposes that he has demolished Newman's objections to the interjectional, parenthetical, or vaguely questioning *You know?* by giving apparent examples of its use since 1350.

This historical argument, however (if a locution was once used, even hundreds of years ago, it must still be good today), is worthless. The question still remains: Is the locution current or acceptable *now* in whatever situation we have in mind? If not, how can an archaism be correct? Anyone still using *thee, thou,* and *shoures soote* will be regarded as eccentric. Grammar and usage have become regularized since the Renaissance, especially in the edited written language, the grapholect. As the *OED* observes about *me* as grammatical subject: "This was very frequent in end of 16th and 17th c[entury], but is now considered ungrammatical." Follett concludes from the 50,000 examples in Jespersen's multivolume grammar that "a precedent can be found for practically any construction or locution." Even T.R. Lounsbury, whom the antipurist Quinn claims as mentor, insists that when citing great authors as authorities in usage, we must be careful to distinguish between slips of the pen (performance errors) and regular usage.

A few of those who cite ancient precedents against language critics actually misinterpret the historical evidence in the *OED*. Baron, arguing against Newman, informs us that the collocation *to convince someone to do something* was, according to the *OED*, used in the 16th century. The *OED*, however, does not justify his claim. Quinn frequently misinterprets historical citations, sometimes through ignorance of grammar, sometimes through neglect of context and meaning. One example is his attempt to show, versus Newman, that *You know?* has a long and honorable history and that its overuse is not the fault of modern illiterates. But of the four examples from 1350 onward, only one really illustrates the interjectional or parenthetical *You know?* spoken with rising intonation. That single example, from Addison's *Spectator* (1712), reads: "How can he help that, you know?" It appears in a fictitious letter by a young and silly correspondent who can think of nothing but her much loved but penurious fiancé. This is not an example of choice language but of fashionable jargon satirically mimicked. Daniels naively trusts Quinn's analysis in this case, but it is all too much for Douglas, also an admirer of Quinn, who explicitly points out Quinn's error, though ignoring his similar errors elsewhere. Quinn's and other linguists' mistake is to snatch at any proof, no matter how tenuous, while ignoring not only grammar, context, and meaning but also distinctions between dialects, styles, or registers—all of which both linguists and literary scholars or critics have taught us to heed.

There begins to emerge a startling contradiction between two kinds of attacks on language critics. On the one hand, linguists often defend locutions by unearthing ancient precedents. On the other hand, language critics are even more frequently attacked when they defend some item of older or traditional usage—*disinterested* instead of the broader *uninterested, I hope* or *it is to be hoped* instead of *hopefully*, and the like. Chanting the magic formula that all languages change constantly and that such change is normal, without noting that it takes place at different speeds in different sectors of the language (for example, slowing down to glacier-like movement in standard written English), the linguists conclude that we can in no way stem or divert any particular tributary of this flow and that language critics are fools even to try. The contradiction now becomes obvious. On the one hand, language critics should not try to hold onto the usages of their childhood—change is inevitable, a force of nature, and they should go with the flow. On the other hand, if any language critic makes fun of some faddish idiom, vogue word, or careless grammar, he must be shown that the usage, though not employed for hundreds of years, is really acceptable because Shakespeare or Chaucer used it. At one moment, why won't language critics admit the rightness of the new? At the next, why won't they admit the rightness of the old?

It is not altogether surprising to find that writers who indulge in *ad hominem* attacks, lack of documentation, errors of fact, and weak or contradictory arguments also misread the arguments of their opponents. Although many examples might be cited, let us concentrate on Daniels, who more or less consistently distorts what language critics write to make them appear foolish and irresponsible. One of his favorite methods is to leave out the context of an opponent's opinion. He tells us that Newman, in his dislike of the *-ize* suffix, goes so far as to condemn the "older and seemingly more established *hospitalize*." Yet, in Chapter 3 of *A Civil Tongue*, entitled "Ize Front," Newman devotes more than 10 pages to the overuse of words compounded with *-ize*, citing *politicalize, factionalize, metamorphosize, strategize, prioritize, funeralize, prophecize, inferiorize, rigidize, cynicize, museumize, parameterize, heroize, reghettoize, televisionize*, and *Pulitzerize*. This list suggests that *hospitalize* was not singled out, but simply appeared in a setting of popular addiction to a vicious habit.

Daniels' twisting of language critics' views sometimes implies absentmindedness and sometimes sheer irresponsibility. On one page, Daniels charges that Simon and other language critics, being elitist and undemocratic, hate the language of the poor and the minorities, while admiring the language of "the refined and wealthier classes." But on the preceding page of his own book, Daniels quotes Simon that "the upper-crust ignoramus who graduated from Groton and Harvard" should not be allowed to "dictate what good English is." At one point, Daniels creates an opinion out of whole cloth, attributes it to Richard Mitchell, and castigates Mitchell for having the opinion. He first quotes Mitchell on the moral value of precise and plain statement, in contrast with Nazi euphemisms for mass murder. (Mitchell: "It's not impossible that thousands of Germans could have done what they did only because they spoke carefully of 'transportation' and 'resettlement' and 'solution' rather than of killings.") Nine pages later, having supplied

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no other relevant material on Mitchell's views, Daniels informs us that "we can [now] appreciate the idiocy of Richard Mitchell's notion that the holocaust was primarily a language problem."

Even worse than this kind of distortion is the linguist's insensitivity to the tone of the language critics, especially of Newman, Simon, and Mitchell. This tone has been obvious to nonlinguist reviewers, who write about Newman: "deadpan humor," "immensely entertaining," "a great wit," "relentlessly funny"; about Simon: "witheringly, wildly funny," "witty," "delightful"; and about Mitchell: "entertaining," "the wittiest discussion . . . now available." Even allowing for reviewerese, the impression is that these language critics are at least somewhat amusing. But the linguists disagree. They characterize Newman, Simon, and Mitchell as "mourners" over the degeneration of English, "doomsayers" who have "apocalyptic jitters," "full of bad temper and solemn rant," and even "frightening."

The linguists' unrecognizable characterization is simply cant, going back perhaps to Lounsbury writing in 1907 about certain unnamed language critics: "An undertone of melancholy . . . pervades most of the utterances of those who devote themselves to the care of the language."

The linguists are unaware of the uniqueness of each of the main language critics. A favorite way of misrepresenting them is to lump them together, as if they were photocopies from the same original. Daniels concludes about Newman, Safire, Mitchell, the Tibbettses, Simon, and the usage panel of the *American Heritage Dictionary*: "The work of all the language critics and experts reviewed so far in this chapter tends to suggest that the tasteful observation of other people's language, whether it is practiced individually or in packs, yields little helpful or accurate information about speech or writing. About all that these tasteful observers have in common is the leftover lore of their schooling in grammar, the sense that they are worthier than almost everyone else, and the conviction that something must be wrong out there." Daniels claims that all the language critics' fussing is about "superficial niceties." Even Dwight Bolinger writes: " . . . the average shaman pays more attention to the ill-chosen word and the grammatical error, and looks for quickie remedies to deal with them." More often than not, the reader gets the impression that all language critics are obsessed with superficial matters such as *who* vs. *whom*, *I* vs. *me*, *shall* vs. *will*, *like* vs. *as*, *between* vs. *among*—that is, the so-called shibboleths.

Having decided that language critics are nothing more than schoolmarms gone public, the linguists sometimes have awkward moments when forced to take notice of specific facts that contradict their careless generalizations. Daniels finds the Tibbettses "curiously soft" on a grammatical point and Mitchell "puzzlingly permissive on a number of points." More often, however, the linguists, having first assumed that language critics are all basically the same, rejoice to discover disagreement about usage among them, though why 100 percent agreement in humane studies should be expected is hard to understand. Bolinger writes: "No two shamans agree on what ought to be listed" as important items of usage. Daniels pretends to sympathize with the earnest student: "What is the learner, the good-hearted, open-minded, self-improvement-oriented reader of these commentaries [by the language critics] supposed to do? Follow Newman and avoid dangling *hopefully*, or go with Safire and Mitchell and use it freely?" Actually, Mitchell does not recommend *hopefully*; he simply says he is interested in more important matters. And Safire, a member of the Editorial Advisory Committee of *American Speech* (the main professional journal of linguists bent on condemning language critics) has for some time now been hunting with the hounds.

There are few linguists who, like Edward Finegan, recognize the one-sidedness and confusion of many of their colleagues. Finegan does allow that language critics often fail to distinguish between, on the one hand, harmless usages that offend traditional conventions and, on the other hand, "verbal pomposity, redundancy, and obfuscation." Still, he goes on, "linguists have often balked at acknowledging the value even of the legitimate critiques of the traditionalists. Instead, they have ridiculed what they saw as frettings over neologisms, lexical mergers, and minor syntactic and morphological variants, and as prissy niggling over spelling variants that even copy editors fail to catch." But, as one might expect, Finegan is damned with faint praise by the linguistically inclined Douglas, who finds Finegan's book "a rather centrist sort of work," "generally informed," and possessing a "bland balance."

If most of the linguists are unable to do justice to the language critics, perhaps they do not appreciate the language critics' concern—sometimes sidetracked—for excellence of language (not minimal effective communication, not mere social acceptability, and not witty conversation). The language critics are not a secret police spying out linguistic subversion among ordinary citizens. Instead, their material chiefly comes from those who write for publication or who speak in public. Such people, thrusting themselves before the public, have a responsibility not merely to the language itself, but to it as a form of behavior that reveals mind, feeling, and morality—in effect, the real human being. As Ben Jonson wrote: "Language most shows a man. Speak, that I may see thee."

Despite their common concern for excellence in language, the language critics are each unique. Safire (the defector) delights in odd varieties of language, in the linguistic trivia that reveal the diversity of human beings. Newman is primarily interested in human behavior, especially when it is manifested in the distinctive language of national, social, or professional groups. He merrily displays with wit, verve, and sometimes too much copiousness the pretentious, the misleading, and the mindless in prose. As for Simon, aside from a certain obsession with minutiae, he chiefly ridicules, more sardonically than Newman, affectation in linguistic behavior, as in his wicked satire on Barbara Walters. He is the strongest on the morality of language; he believes that educated people ought to speak and write better than they now do—and there is little reason to say that he is wrong. Of the four, Mitchell goes the furthest in analyzing, rather than displaying or mimicking, pretentious and meaningless prose; he emphasizes continually the unbreakable connection between language and thought, or how inflated language reflects gaseous thought. Though not everything the language critics write is correct and sensible, they live and work in a *world of value* which linguists hardly ever visit.

We might wonder why most linguists refuse to recognize what language critics are doing. It would be interesting to suggest some general reasons for their failure instead of merely giving the impression that they are quirky and unscientific.

First, some of these linguists may lack literary culture or may

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have rejected it to satisfy the demands of their discipline. Otherwise, how can the language critics' satire go unrecognized, with its typical devices of humor, wit, hyperbole, caricature, mimicry, and persona or mask?

Second, the linguists seem very proud of their relatively new and growing "science" and seem to feel resentful when the general public ignores them by putting its faith in various language critics. Employing the scientific method, with statistics and charts, phonological symbols, and tree diagrams, the linguists sneer at the practical insight and intuition of even the best and most experienced users of English, such as Russell Baker, John Ciardi, Marc Connelly, Malcolm Cowley, Ralph Ellison, Paul Horgan, Langston Hughes, Katherine Anne Porter, Leo Rosten, Jean Stafford, Wallace Stegner, and Allen Tate (all from the usage panel of *American Heritage Dictionary*). After all, these people are merely good writers; what right have they to opinions about language? Have they conducted field interviews? Have they mastered the scholarly literature on linguistics?

Third, a surprising number of linguists have an unexamined faith in the criterion of usage for deciding problems of linguistic choice. Some of these "usagists" tell us to follow the usage of great writers; some only the settled usage of great writers; some tell us to follow the usage of the upper class (whatever that may be in the United States); some the usage of magazine writers for *Harper's* and *Atlantic*; some the usage of college graduates (whether of Berkeley or of Sasquatch State College); and some tell us to follow the usage of the people, whatever that may mean. The criterion of usage, an object of adoration to linguists, turns out to be a false idol.

Finally, many linguists interested in usage show a remarkable intellectual naiveté about the relationship between the descriptive and the prescriptive, the *is* and the *ought*. Both Fries and Hall take it for granted that what most people say or write has automatically decided what people *should* say or write. Hall's definition of "good" language is quite behavioristic: "language which gets the desired effect with the least friction and difficulty for its user." I suppose he is referring to situations such as that in Joseph Heller's *Catch*-22 when the hungry Major------de Coverley arrives at the mess hall to discover that Captain Black requires the signing of a loyalty oath before anyone is fed. Major------de Coverley simply barks: "Gimme eat!" and gets what he wants. But language is used in life and literature for more than such elementary situations. Can Hall use his simplistic formula to evaluate the Gettysburg Address, Samuel Johnson's letter to the Earl of Chesterfield, or Henry James's later style? Hall insists that what he calls "aesthetic considerations" in language are totally subjective and that no one has the right to offer advice or judgments about them. What aesthetic considerations have to do with getting the "desired effect" is left unexplored.

Despite these would-be scientists who have rejected the art of literary interpretation, trusting unthinkingly the criterion of usage, who have unphilosophically assumed that *is* determines *ought*, the great majority of thoughtful people will continue wishing to speak and write well, not just passably or acceptably. They buy the books of the language critics not because they have been panicked into insecurity about their use of language, but because in the world of thought, feeling, language, and values, they know they should strive for excellence. Quinn may claim to admire the vitality of typical Watergate metaphors, but most of us will regard as clichés *to bite the bullet, the bottom line, to stroke someone, to play hard ball, to kick ass*, and *to open a can of worms*. Most of us will also reject Daniels' paradoxical defense of Orwellian political obfuscation on the grounds that there is no essential or necessary connection between thought and language, since it's the thinking that's bad, not the language.

Having surveyed the arguments of the linguists against the language critics, I am struck with a kind of melancholy. It is sad to see a number of highly trained scholars who can record dialects, compile dictionaries, and generalize about the structure of language, unable to understand what language critics are doing and what that activity is worth. Unwilling to read with accuracy, they mechanically react with contempt and anger. I once had a teacher, a very good one, who every now and then indulged in a temper tantrum, which embarrassed us. It is similarly embarrassing to find such irrationality among experts in a discipline from which we have learned so much about language. Even more important is what the linguists deprive us of by their tantrums. We are all surely aware that the language critics, however penetrating their insights, cannot always be right. Who but the linguist should be more fit, potentially at least, to rationally evaluate their advice and help guide us toward excellence in language? But in their ruthless and hostile attitude toward the language critics, the linguists are failing us, even as they squander their knowledge and ability.

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AN ELEGY TO A WRITER *by Mildred Harding*

Pearl Craigie, the long forgotten novelist and playwright "John Oliver Hobbes," who died in 1906, is due for resurrection.

She has haunted me for over 40 years. It was through my study of the Anglo-Irish novelist George Moore in the 1940's (particularly through Joseph Hone's biography of him), that Mrs. Craigie first came into my ken, piqued my curiosity, and won my sympathy. Late in 1893 the 41-year-old author of *A Mummer's Wife* (1884) and *Confessions of a Young Man* (1888) met and fell in love with 25-year-old Pearl Craigie, already a successful writer. Born in America, daughter of a wealthy American patent-medicine manufacturer who settled in England immediately after her birth, Pearl Craigie was beautiful, clever, fashionable, and musical, a woman of strict principles, socially ambitious, separated from her husband, and a recent convert from her family's Nonconformism to Roman Catholicism.

In the winter of 1893-94, Moore and Mrs. Craigie spent much time together and collaborated on a play, *The Fool's Hour* (Act I appeared in the first issue of *The Yellow Book*, April 1894). For the only time in his life, Moore was ready to break his resolution never to marry. Then "suddenly and without a cause" Mrs. Craigie told him she did not wish to see him again. Bitterly hurt, he maligned her everywhere, saying that she had rejected him in the hope of marrying "a handsome worldling" (Lord Curzon), and he portrayed her ruthlessly in the heartless heroine of "Mildred Lawson" (*Celibates*, 1895). After a lukewarm reconciliation (at her insistence, said Moore, who was now in love with someone else), they again collaborated on a play, *Journeys End in Lovers' Meeting*, which was performed in June 1895. Again they quarreled. In 1904, Moore visited Mrs. Craigie in her family's mansion in the Isle of Wight; once more they collaborated on a play, *The Coming of Gabrielle*. "[In] the morning," Moore wrote to a friend, "she walks in the garden and on the terrace in the most delicious Watteau costumes, rose coloured silks and flowers in her hat." He spoke of settling in the Isle of Wight. But once more they quarreled. "I was walking in the Green Park," Moore later reported, "and I saw her in front of me. I was blind with rage and I ran up behind her and kicked her"—a scene which he elaborated in "Lui et Elles" in the 1921 edition of *Memoirs of My Dead Life*. Thanks to Moore's malicious gossip, their turbulent relationship—which was important grist to his literary mill (especially in *Evelyn Innes* [1898] and *Sister Teresa* [1901])—was the talk of Mayfair and of literary London from the time of their meeting until and even after Mrs. Craigie's death.

Mildred Harding writes from Florida.

What a fascinating woman! I thought. But the 1940's, 50's, and half the 60's brought me no time for pursuing her acquaintance. At last, late in November 1966, in a little hotel in London (where I had just alighted for a brief pre-Christmas holiday), Mrs. Craigie suddenly demanded my attention. From a copy of *The Times* that lay open on a table, the final words of an advertisement by Sotheby's sprang at me like an electric shock: "manuscripts and letters of John Oliver Hobbes." Postponing my return to the States until the last possible pre-Christmas flight, I buried myself in the Reading Room of the British Museum.

There, as I skimmed John Morgan Richards' (her father's) illustrated, adulatory *Life of John Oliver Hobbes: Told in Her Correspondence With Numerous Friends* (London, 1911) and several articles about her (though not yet any of her own works), Pearl Mary Teresa Craigie was becoming more and more intriguing. The external facts of her life—always against a background of wealth and culture—unfolded like a lavish cinematic period piece in two parts. The first half was charmingly romantic: the pretty girl's precocious, pampered childhood and adolescence in London and, in summers from 1872, in the Isle of Wight; her governesses, private schools, and distinguished patrons; her musical studies in Paris; her presentation at court; her fairy-tale marriage, at 19, to Reginald Walpole Craigie, a handsome man-about-town; their hectic social life, and, in 1890, the birth of a son. Into the more somber second half, the heroine seemed to be crowding several lives: separation from her husband (1891); acceptance into the Roman Catholic Church (1892); a squalid divorce (1895) with complete custody of the child (according to *The Times* report, an "exceedingly filthy" case, "most of its details . . . unfit for publication in a newspaper"); and, throughout these 16 years, constant scholarly study; attendance at galleries, plays, concerts, and operas; occasional public performance as pianist; religious retreats; travel in Europe, the United States, and the Near East; social stardom in Mayfair and country houses, even in India at the Durbar as guest of the Viceroy (1902-03); continual entertaining; friendship and correspondence with a host of brilliant men (e.g., Gosse, Symons, Yeats, Hardy, university professors, painters, musicians, actors, politicians, Protestant and Catholic churchmen); rumored proposals from several distinguished men (e.g., Lord Asquith, Balfour, Curzon); public lectures on literature, including a lecture tour in the United States; through it all, frequent exhaustion and increasingly delicate health—and somehow, also from 1891, a steady torrent of writings as John Oliver Hobbes (tales, novels, plays, journalistic and scholarly essays). Then, at 38, sudden death, in her bed—apparently from heart failure.

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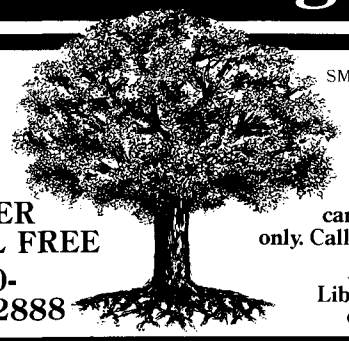

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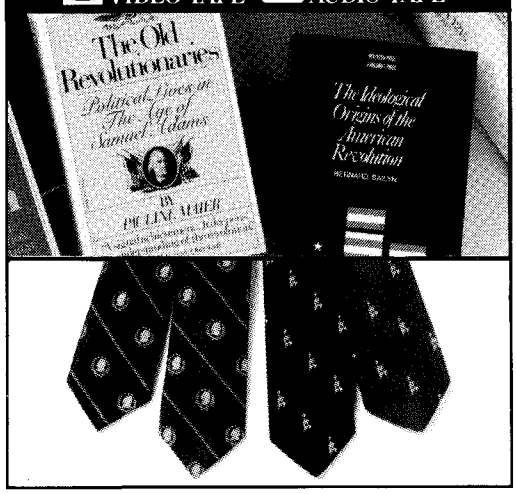
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What sort of inner person, I wondered, was behind all that "turning, turning, / In mazes of heat and sound"? Apparently a tantalizing and very human bundle of contradictions:

> Her worldly delight in social pleasures and activities (said Sir Sidney Lee) seemed to be combined with a mystical conviction of their hollowness and futility. In spite of marked business aptitude and a capacity to make money, she spent more than she could afford, and failed to husband her resources. With her sincere devotion to the creed of her adoption, there went a deep despondency . . . in painful contrast with her vivacity in social intercourse. . . . Her sensitiveness to criticism and her eagerness to defend her work . . . against public censure are hard to reconcile with her claim to be treated as an idealist. . . . She was more ambitious of the reputation of a serious thinker than of a witty novelist.

If only I could meet her son! I thought—the Colonel Craigie who had put the Hobbes materials in Sotheby's hands. When he didn't appear at the auction ("He's frail," Sotheby's said, "a kind of recluse"), I wrote him a timorous note, which Sotheby's forwarded.

Suddenly there he was on my hotel telephone, calling from somewhere in Hampshire, his voice happily tremulous, apologizing for not coming to London "straight away" ("I'm just out of hospital, you see"), urging me to come to see him in Preston-Candover.

Two days later I spent several intense hours virtually in Pearl Craigie's company, so alive was she still to the handsome, courtly, fiery, and humorous old man who had never ceased to adore her. "I'm 76, you know," he said as he guided me into the living room, "exactly twice her age when she died." Then he burst out, "Thirty-eight! Only thirty-eight! It should have been me!" Pictures of every size from formal portrait to miniature, mostly of her, some of him, covered the living-room walls, mantel, and tabletops. "She was a little bit of a thing, you know, about your size," he said, looking down on the top of my head as he handed me a sherry before seating me in front of the fire. After a few minutes his wife joined us. Whatever I asked, he answered eagerly. Sometimes he laughed, sometimes paced the room, sometimes sat quietly, head high, brown eyes—so like hers!—gazing beyond the wall, back more than 60 years; sometimes he looked hard at me with eyes full of tears.

He told me, first of all, about the shock of learning, at nearly 16, of his mother's death. And the cause? "She killed herself. I feel sure of it. She was terribly upset when she left us. She took too many sleeping pills. And no wonder." Several long strains in her life had become excruciating: poor health, constant work, financial anxieties (she supported herself and her child with her writing and lecturing), difficult relationships with both her parents—her beloved, moody "comic millionaire father," continually on the verge of bankruptcy, and her eccentric, increasingly mad and maddening mother. When I broached the subject of her marriage and divorce, he said, "It was a love match. They were happy at first." Then he was silent. "Hadn't you better spill the beans, love?" his wife said softly. He hesitated a little. "Well, yes . . . but," and looking solemnly into my eyes, "this must go no further." I promised that it wouldn't. And he told me a shocking fact about his father (which I have never seen publicized and have never told). When his mother, then pregnant, had learned the situation, she was terrified. "She rode horseback recklessly. Just think! She tried to get rid of me!" The Colonel's revelation explained the reticence and disgust in *The Times* report of the divorce and filled me with compassion for the young woman who, with the baby and his nurse, had fled from her husband and announced to her father, on his doorstep, "I will never set foot in my husband's house again." Indeed it illuminated as nothing else could have done the whole future course of Pearl Craigie's life.

Was George Moore right about her hoping to marry Lord Curzon? "Certainly not!" Did she ever consider remarrying? "Only once, I believe. The painter, Walter Sickert. But she was determined not to let anyone pay her debts for her." Besides, remarriage would have conflicted with her Roman Catholicism and so with her conscience.

About the relationship between his mother and himself, the Colonel spoke with special delight and poignancy. "Before I went to Eton we were never apart for long. Do you know, I slept in my mother's bedroom until I was 10 years old!" Through all his years at Eton she wrote to him nearly every day—tender, humorous letters. He loved her visits. "She was so lovely! I was so *proud* of her!" When he returned home for holidays, he would bound up the stairs to her. Her sense of fun, her humor, never failed her. "Mother taught me religion. She did even that with humor." He recalled with particular immediacy being in a box at St. James's Theatre, in his eighth year, for the opening night of John Oliver Hobbes's play *The Ambassador* (1898). At the final curtain, the audience clapped and called "Author! Author!" Finally his mother—petite and elegant in white satin—walked onto the stage. The audience was quiet, baffled. Then someone called out, "Oh, pretty John! pretty John!" and amid general delight, the clapping broke out anew.

At last, with my taxi at the door, the Colonel handed me Zoë Procter's (Mrs. Craigie's secretary's) privately printed autobiography ("It's hard to find. Borrow mine! Just drop it off at my club!") and then, sweeping up the three late letters of his mother's that he had been showing me (too precious to give to Sotheby's), he put them, too, in my hands, saying, "Keep them! I want someone kind to write about my mother!" Then he kissed me on the cheek and, as his wife led me to the door, called "Good-bye! Bless you!"

How could I *not* feel committed to such a trust? But, alas, after a few zealous days in London libraries and bookshops, I was back in the United States, unavoidably bound to other tasks, and once more—except for tracing and buying her books, which had long been out of print—"the dream" had to yield to "the business."

When, nearly 20 years later, I finally opened the box in which I had stored my Craigie books and papers, I had to face the question: What if—however interesting Pearl Craigie herself—her works (which I had still not read) actually deserve their oblivion? Temporarily ignoring her plays, I plunged into her novels, resolutely unbiased.

With the first that I read, her final one, *The Dream and the Business* (1906), excitement banished doubt. Then all the rest fueled my enthusiasm. Here was treasure!—a variety of fresh, compelling "good reads" in pure, graceful prose; a world of live and fascinating men and women; and throughout, a

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personal, unique voice constantly engaging the reader, mind and spirit, with the luminous intelligence of the author. Surely, I thought, Hobbes merits a place on the literary scholar's bookshelf as well as the general reader's, in the company of Austen, the Brontes, George Eliot, and Mrs. Gaskell, of Meredith, Hardy, and Galsworthy, not to mention such moderns as Virginia Woolf, Rose Macaulay, Murdoch, Lessing, Graham Greene, and Evelyn Waugh.

Why, then, have these novels been unprinted and almost completely ignored all these years? True, certain of their characteristics could deter some readers: occasional unnatural dialogue and "precious" witticisms (especially in the early works); in some plots too much reliance on coincidence and on letters and journals; intrusive comments; "dated" morality; a religious point of view. But which novels by Hobbes's established predecessors and contemporaries are free of those same characteristics?

Attempting to explain that long neglect, three of Hobbes's few recent critics—Oliver Edwards, Margaret Maison, and Vineta Colby—have pointed to those and other deterrents. But each of those three has also made a strong case for the merits of at least some of Hobbes's novels. While acknowledging that Hobbes's use of letters and journals, her comments, and her "mysticism" might annoy, Edwards praises her erudition and wit, her "unique achievement," especially in her two-volume historical-political-religious work *The School for Saints* (1897) and its sequel, *Robert Orange* (1900): "a novel no other writer would have attempted or could have accomplished" ("Mrs. Hobbes," *The Times*, Dec. 15, 1966). In an informative, appreciative survey of Pearl Craigie's life and work, Maison emphasizes, without condemning them herself, traits which have displeased some readers: the epigrams and witticisms of the earliest novels and the deepening "note of religious sincerity" in the later ones—"undertones of pain and anguish . . . a more serious philosophical strain . . . profounder spiritual insight . . . occasional touches of mysticism" ("The Brilliant Mrs. Craigie," *The Listener*, Aug. 1969, 272-73). Of Hobbes's novels as a whole Maison says:

> . . . her novels . . . can hardly be dismissed as mere period pieces reflecting drawing-room manners and that peculiar blend of faith and frivolity characteristic of the Nineties. They have, besides a clever wit, a depth of philosophical thoughtfulness, a rather sad wisdom and a consistently good style—all rare qualities in feminine fiction.

In *The Singular Anomaly: Women Novelists of the Nineteenth Century* (1970), Colby treats Hobbes comprehensively—but unfairly!—as one of five women novelists who, like George Eliot, "had first-rate minds" and explored the "most serious social and ethical questions of their time," but who, unlike her, "could never assimilate and integrate their knowledge and their ideas into a work of art." Barb after barb, Colby's account of Pearl Craigie herself is excessively harsh, as in these typical comments:

> Her misfortune . . . was that in being able to have everything [because of her father's wealth], she possessed or mastered nothing.
>
> The personal pose she assumed was that of tragic muse. Like many another poseur, Mrs. Craigie eventually became what she pretended to be.
>
> To trace her life is to see a small-scale drawing-room tragedy: a bright talent misspent and wasted.

—and in this unkindest cut of all:

> Writing was a form of personal indulgence for Mrs. Craigie as, indeed, her whole life was an indulgence; her ill health, her religion, her philanthropy, probably even her unhappy marriage, are expressions of it. In 1898 her mysterious malady . . . was finally diagnosed as a form of epilepsy, *le petit mal*. She appeared to welcome the diagnosis as an excuse for a veritable debauch of self-indulgence—physical, spiritual, and intellectual.

That cruelly biased view of the author distorts Colby's discussion of Hobbes's novels. So, too, does Colby's procrustean effort to fit the novels to her thesis. She unduly emphasizes, on the one hand, the brains, diligence, ambition, egotism, and "weird and perverse taste" expressed in the novels, and on the other, their *lack* (as she sees it) of truly imaginative content and of formal, technical excellence. Remarkably, however, even in such a treatment all Hobbes's novels shine through as too vital to deserve neglect, and Colby admits that the last four (*The Serious Wooing, Love and the Soul-Hunters, The Vineyard,* and *The Dream and the Business* "show increasing technical mastery owing in part at least to her experience in the theatre."

My particular claim (to be developed elsewhere) is that Pearl Craigie's novels—wrung as they are from her own intense experience, her own brief and strenuous journey toward self-knowledge—brilliantly and wisely illuminate the lives of women, especially of intelligent, sensitive, sophisticated women living in the cultural storm and stress of the end of an era. In her diverse female characters—sirens, scholars, and artists, lovers and loved ones, saints and sinners, Eves and Liliths, dutiful and rebellious wives and daughters—modern women will surely see their sisters and themselves. In her philosophical and increasingly mythic interpretations of the life of men and women, modern readers will see a passionate rediscovery of perennial classical and Judaic-Christian concepts and values: of the very meaning, within that religious-humanistic framework, of tragedy, comedy, honor, character, fate, freedom, responsibility, passion, love, duty, sin, renunciation, redemption, grace, blessedness . . . of the arts, of myth . . . of life itself.

Surveying her life and work, we can imagine with what delight Pearl Craigie—if she had lived to be old—might well have added to her charmed circle of friends and correspondents many of the most exciting minds of our own century; indeed, in a letter to her publisher (1904), Mrs. Craigie prophetically stated for herself her strong claim upon us:

> I am absolutely certain that my *biggest* sales are for the future, because some of my best ideas are far in advance of the present average reader. . . . I write from knowledge and that is why . . . the books will ultimately have value. They have many faults, no doubt, but they are not twaddle. As psychological stuff they are sound and as studies of modern English life, they are the truth.

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Dreams of Education *by E. Christian Kopff*

"They say such different things at school."
—W.B. Yeats

The Legacies of Literacy **by Harvey J. Graff, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press; $57.50.**

From Humanism to the Humanities **by Anthony Grafton and Lisa Jardine, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; $27.50.**

William Butler Yeats, Senator of the Irish Republic, heard about contemporary trends in education from "a kind old nun in a white hood":

> The children learn to cipher and to sing,
> to study reading-books and history,
> to cut and sew, be neat in everything
> in the best modern way.

All that industrious scurrying after mediocrity made Yeats dream of the heights of human beauty and self-fulfillment, polar opposites to the goals of modern education. A year ago a columnist in a Denver paper found out how much money is paid to teenage girls who have illegitimate children. He demanded high school courses to teach poor girls not to produce babies. Such different things do we seek from education in our time. What is the history of such disparate cravings and demands?

Harvey J. Graff, of the University of Texas at Dallas, tries to answer part of that question in *The Legacies of Literacy*, an ungainly but interesting survey of the secondary scholarship on literacy from the ancient Greeks to today's Third World. Graff does not ask much of literacy: It is the ability to write your name and read a basic document. Some people can do one and not the other. A society may be literary, that is, depend on written laws and a written sacred scripture and yet (as in the Middle Ages) have only a minority of literate citizens. Societies have achieved total literacy without a school system, such as Lutheran Sweden and Iceland in the 17th and 18th centuries. Literacy by itself does not correlate highly with economic progress or, indeed, any social good. The fast rising literacy rates in modern Africa, for instance, have not led to democracy or wealth. Take-off periods such as the Renaissance and the Enlightenment were not heavily literate. Although the education industry in America claims that we need ever more education, "new literacies," most new jobs in America need less reading ability, not more. When the U.S. Army tested its recruits, it found that "they were able to perform successfully in jobs where the reading difficulties of material exceeded their average reading ability by four to eight grades," because they were interested in the tasks and friends helped them.

At this point the reader of *Chronicles* is becoming impatient. It is all very well to assert the absence of a literacy crisis, as long as literacy is defined as the ability to sign a welfare check and read the want ads and *TV Guide*, as the Los Angeles School District did some time ago. But in today's complex world we need much more. We need access to several foreign languages and cultures, to mathematical types of reasoning, and to the ability to analyze issues and facts critically and objectively. Most people in America, however, receive their culture orally from movies, radio, TV, and cassettes. Public school literacy enables them to function at their jobs. They study the Bible in Bible study groups, not with Greek and Hebrew lexica and commentaries. They do not read Gibbon, Rabelais, or *Chronicles*, and they do not feel the lack.

The average person gets along quite well on his own level with skills derived from public schools and on-the-job training. Our leaders, on the other hand, suffer from short-sightedness rooted in a monoglot ignorance of the world, past and present, and an uncritical acceptance of what is dished up in the public prints. Anthony Grafton of Princeton and Lisa Jardine of Cambridge (UK) think that the liberal arts curriculum inherited from the Renaissance is part of the problem. *From Humanism to the Humanities* traces the development of Humanist education from 15th-century teachers such as Guarino of Verona, who emphasized the ethical significance of reading great Latin authors, to the 16th-century world of Peter Ramus, who led the way towards a more pragmatic, job-oriented curriculum.

Grafton and Jardine are both excellent Renaissance scholars, and Grafton is one of our best intellectual historians. This, however, is not a very good book. It exudes the Pushmepullyou bouquet often emitted by double authorship. The idea for the book was born 10 years ago, when the authors' paths crossed for a semester; and although their original research has developed, their thinking on this topic is still immature.

Harvard University Press claims that "the book is based on intensive archival research," but most of it is an interpretative summary of earlier scholarship, such as Lauro Martinez's *Social World of the Florentine Humanists* (1963) and Walter Ong's *Ramus, Method, and the Decay of Dialogue* (1959). Page after page is derived from T.W. Baldwin's *William Shakespeare's Small Latine and*

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Lesse Greeke of 1944, including three pages of untranslated Latin from the hand of Edward VI. There are good pages on Valla and Erasmus. But much of the book is derivative and careless, especially parts that may reasonably be imputed to Jardine. Both scholars have done better work apart.

The Introduction announces, "It is our contention that teachers and students of the humanities today need to be fully aware . . . of the fact that the security of the humanities within institutions of higher education in particular rests on the continuing assumption that they are intrinsically supportive of 'civilisation'—that is, of the Establishment." (The critical reader will note the spelling of "civilization." The ideological parts of the book tend to have an English orientation.) Once we get into the text, we meet people like Lorenzo Valla, Erasmus, and Peter Ramus, who were far from being "supportive of the Establishment." Was it supportive of the Establishment for Lorenzo Valla to publish a scholarly pamphlet that proved that the Donation of Constantine, the legal basis of papal rule in Italy, was a post-Constantinian forgery? However, the authors tell us that Valla produced a "set of highly polemical scholarly works" to prove that "teachers of grammar and rhetoric deserved the sort of esteem and salaries" received by dialecticians and philosophers under Medieval education. In modern terms, he did it to get a raise from the dean, but Valla as an Establishment lackey just will not wash.

Chapter One, on the great Humanist educator Guarino of Verona, reads like a parody of Grafton's important book on the great classicist Joseph Scaliger, where he showed Scaliger failing to live up to his own self-proclaimed standards. Guarino promised a rich and fulfilled life to his students, but they spent most of their time memorizing grammatical rules and slowly trudging through a few basic works in Latin. No educator ever pretended that the process of learning to read and write Latin was fun but that it produced a better person who had access to more interesting alternatives in life. Sitting around jabbering about death and sex roles and the Establishment is more fun, but the end result is mediocrity.

The humanities are not especially secure in today's universities, and the least secure part is the teaching of literature and language. The intellectual training needed to master Greek and Latin and the resultant confrontation with great minds produce unpredictable results. There are plenty of lackeys, but there is also the occasional Valla or Erasmus. Thucydides confirmed Thomas Hobbes in his monarchism, but Tacitus convinced revolutionaries in the 17th and 18th centuries of the evils of Kingship. Our authors are influenced by Lauro Martinez's famous formulation that Humanism was "a program for the ruling class." It was many other things as well, as the authors' own examples show.

Humanist education needs a critical evaluation that goes beyond the Humanists' own propaganda. Grafton and Jardine ignore the critique in the first chapter of C.S. Lewis' OHEL (as he liked to call his volume in the series "Oxford History of English Literature"), while repeating his observation that the Medieval education that the Humanists replaced was a superb one. Humanism can take some credit for Shakespeare and Rabelais, but the older education produced Dante and St. Thomas.

My contrasting examples bring up the worst result of the Humanists' success: For all their pseudo-Ciceronian bombast, they succeeded in killing Latin as the language of culture and science. Nothing, not even the Reformation, did more to destroy the unity of European culture than that stupid act of vandalism. How much time does every scholar lose because important work has appeared in a language he does not know or cannot read with ease? How much international cooperation has been frustrated by nationalistic language barriers that did not exist in the Middle Ages and the Renaissance? Erasmus, the most farsighted of the Humanists, saw what they were doing and wrote a devastating attack on it in "The Ciceronian." But not even

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Erasmus' prestige could stop the Humanists' lemming march to destruction.

Instead, however, of analyzing what was wrong with the Humanists on the basis of their own ideals and those of their contemporary critics, we are treated to talk of the Establishment. The problem with conspiratorialists is not that there are no conspiracies—there are plenty of them—but the insistence that there is only one conspiracy. What was the Establishment in Renaissance Italy? There were many city states: the Church, itself no monolith; and the influence of other European empires and nations. What single Establishment did Erasmus serve? Is there only one Establishment in England or America, or even in individual universities?

The possibility of universal literacy lies in our hands. Is it really worth grasping at? The foundations of the liberal arts curriculum were born in enthusiasm and high hopes. To what extent has it outlived its usefulness? What do we want from education, anyhow? Should it aim at universal but minimal competence, the production of an informed and committed elite, or the possibility of personal creativity and fulfillment? Or should it just stop teenage girls from getting pregnant? Until we reach some consensus on these issues, discussions of education will resemble these books, full of life and excitement, but still a confused babble, in which we continue to ask, with Yeats, "How can we tell the dancer from the dance?"

Hooked on Socialism *by Paul Gottfried*

"In politics a community of hatred is almost always the foundation of friendships."

—Tocqueville

***Out of Step* by Sidney Hook, New York: Doubleday.**

Norman Podhoretz, in the March 11, 1987, *Washington Post*, describes Sidney Hook as "one of the most courageous intellectuals of the twentieth century." While this particular description may more aptly be used for Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and others who have fought for human dignity in the face of brutal oppression, Hook has been willing to espouse unpopular causes. Though an archetypal man of the left, he has been second to none in decrying Communist tyranny. He is right to remind us that he condemned Soviet imperialism when the isolationist right in America was more concerned about imaginary Communists at home than real ones in Soviet uniforms.

At age 85, Hook can look back on a distinguished career as an academic philosopher and controversialist. Born in New York City to immigrant Jewish parents, Hook spent most of his life exploring philosophic and existential questions within 10 miles of his place of birth: first, as a student at City College of New York, caught between the redemptive promise of revolutionary Marxism and the dialectical sharpness of his philosophy professor Morris Raphael Cohen; later, as a graduate student of John Dewey at Columbia University, where he slowly abandoned Marxist-Leninism for Dewey's pragmatic method and social democratic views; and finally, as a longtime head of the philosophy department at New York University. In *The Meaning of Marx* (1934), Hook demonstrated his thorough grounding in Marx's writings and his interest in reconciling Marx's understanding of history and an empirical, characteristically Deweyite approach to learning.

As Dewey's pragmatism and the recognition of Soviet inhumanity came to dominate his thinking, Hook turned passionately against Communist dogmatism and its implicit worship of history. In the late 50's he was instrumental in organizing the Congress for Cultural Freedom, a group of mostly left-of-center intellectuals who tried to combat Communist fellow travelers in the arts and universities. In his tract "Heresy, Yes, Conspiracy, No" (1953), Hook disputed the claim that Communists could be dispassionate scholars and worthwhile members of the academic community. In "Academic Freedom and Academic Anarchy" (1970), Hook took on the new breed of academic radicals of the 60's and 70's. In the name of academic freedom, such radicals, he insisted, were subverting academic authority and deliberately inciting others to violence.

Hook exposes others on the left who have refrained from criticizing the Soviets. And he discredits Soviet apologists by revealing embarrassing things about their political stances. For example, Lincoln Steffens, who paid homage to the "Soviet experiment," admired fascism as well as communism; it was only in speaking about societies that would have granted him personal liberty that Steffens lost his visionary enthusiasm. Bertolt Brecht, who in college German classes is still presented as an "anti-fascist author," comes in for even more devastating comment. According to Hook, who conversed with him, Brecht not only knew about Stalin's genocidal crimes but also endorsed them. Brecht let it be known that Stalin had overcome bourgeois superstitions by killing the innocent. Hook also draws memorable portraits of New York intellectuals, such as Philip Rahv and other hopelessly hooked fellow travelers. Deprived of their youthful faith in a Soviet paradise but still unreconciled to American middle-class values, these intellectuals looked desperately to the slogans and gestures of the New Left to give meaning to their protest. Often, as in the case of Rahv, a Russian-Jewish intellectual who wrote perceptively on European literature, the attempt to bridge the generational gap produced ludicrous fiasco. The older Marxists, who read books, took baths, and treated their parents with respect, had little in common with the rising generation of radicals.

Because of Hook's admirable record as an anti-Communist and as a defender of rational academic discourse, other anti-Communists have shown reluctance

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to disagree with him. For example, Paul Johnson, in reviewing Hook's memoirs for the *Washington Times*, praises him without qualification. Never does Johnson mention that some of the most provocative parts of *Out of Step* are Hook's defense of socialism and a "democratic form of secularization." This omission, on Johnson's part, seems strange, coming as it does from a self-declared Christian conservative historian. Perhaps Johnson agrees with one movement conservative who in speaking about Hook explained: "He's sound where it counts, fighting the Commies and the academic crazies."

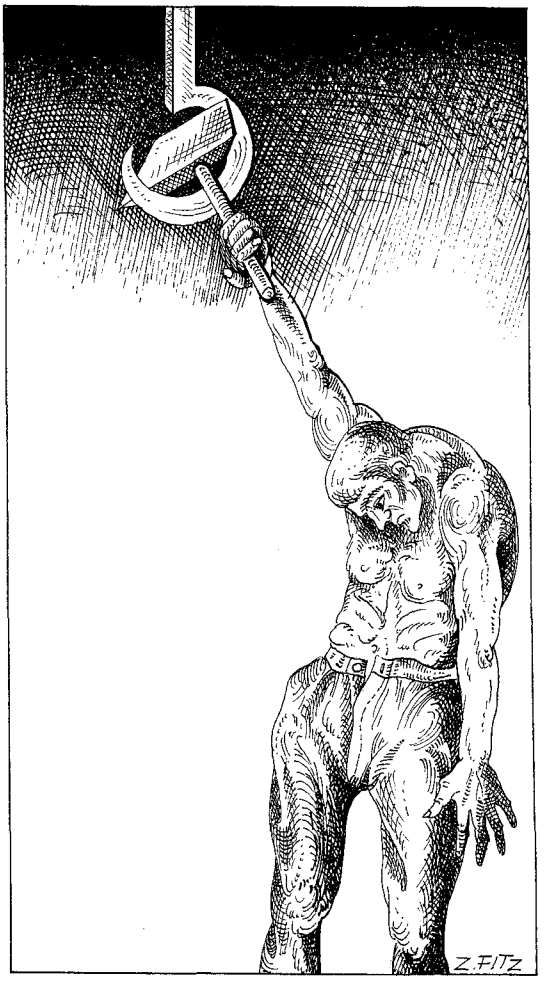
Needless to say, such a judgment fails to take Hook's world view seriously. For want of a better term, one may call this view "untragic atheism." Unlike those atheists who consider the "death of God" to be somehow disturbing, even the point of departure for an anguished, fatalistic philosophy, Hook and other untragic atheists pooh-pooh the loss of a Providential universe. Indeed they go on believing in a soft kind of Christianity, a secularized form of progress, which teaches that humankind is advancing, even though jerkingly, toward a culturally homogeneous and socially egalitarian future. Moral laws as such will not crumble in this future world but become more humane as the result of rational dialogues, the removal of class barriers, and the disintegration of theistic illusion.

Hook presents this view most explicitly in his critical observations about Whittaker Chambers, the former Communist who became a founding father of postwar conservatism and a devoutly Christian Quaker. According to Hook, Chambers was correct to abandon Communism but wrong to turn against the "authentic liberal tradition . . . from Jefferson to [John] Dewey" and to make a nonexistent deity "the source or the justification of man's moral judgments." Hook argues that God is "always created in man's moral image." Thus "when Chambers thought he had 'found God,' he was really rediscovering certain basic moral truths that do not rest in theology." "If God is completely other [as Augustine, Karl Barth, and Chambers all insist], one can believe in Him and still do anything one pleases." Moreover, "the religious view of the world becomes sensitive to human freedom only when it is persecuted." Hook concludes that the "final conflict of the age" is not between belief and unbelief but "between the democratic form of secularization, dedicated to the broadest religious tolerance, and the totalitarian form of secularization, intolerant not only of religion but of all free and spontaneous variations in art, philosophy, and other works of the human spirit."

Here as elsewhere in his book, Hook insists on hurling down the gauntlet before religionists who, like Johnson, may go on extolling him without noticing this repetitive gesture. Hook sets up a straw man in place of religion. His own version of Christian theological claims removes God entirely from the universe, by misrepresenting the doctrine of divine transcendence.

Contrary to Hook's assertion, neither Solzhenitsyn nor Karl Barth nor Augustine argued that God remained totally aloof from the world He had created. One might have expected Hook to know enough Christian theology not to confuse it with some variant of the Gnostic heresy. It is also questionable whether skeptics have a better record of defending political freedoms than Christians and Jews. Hook presents his case unfairly by identifying religion with obscurantists while associating skepticism with people like himself—that is, with those who grew up in a still vestigiously religious society, whether Eastern European Jewish or middle-class Protestant. Why not, for the sake of balanced perspective, place Lenin, Stalin, Hitler, and Eichmann in the camp of the freethinkers? This seems only fair, seeing that Hook cannot discuss religion without evoking the bugaboo of ecclesiastical authoritarianism. Of course the piety Chambers exemplified was unrelated to ecclesiastical authoritarianism. Indeed Chambers, who embraced the teaching that the Kingdom of God is in each man, emphasized that side of biblical Christianity most supportive of the individual person.

One might even suggest that Hook's increasing isolation on the anti-Communist left may indicate something about the untenability of his position. The reconstructionist and homogenizing thrust of his thinking, together with its implicit denial of permanent moral restraints, makes his democratic secularism a doubtful bulwark of our liberty. His plan for reforming society assumes that everyone can be transformed into an idealized clone of himself. One wonders, what is the intended fate of those who resist conditioning or who continue to struggle for their property rights and religious convictions? Hook's paeans to democratic procedure cannot redeem what is morally problematic and theologically simplistic in his thinking. Counting heads may be a good idea where agreement on first principles exists. In the absence of such consensus, as Plato pointed out, democratic rituals are an invitation to anarchy and to tyranny. Thomas Molnar explains rather well why Hook and other anti-Communist secular humanists must fight a lonely battle with a diminishing base of support: "The difference between totalitarianism and the liberal-democratic secularists is that the latter suggest the gradualness of the process of absorption, while the former insist on its acceleration." The theoretical battle between Hook and the Communists may be seen as one over instruments and procedures. Hook is undoubtedly a kinder and more decent man than those he attacks, but it is best to turn elsewhere for true alternatives to the Communist vision of man.



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Cut-Flower Moralists *by Bryce Christensen*

"Tell me, can you find indeed
Nothing sure, no moral plan
Clear prescribed, without your creed?"
—Matthew Arnold

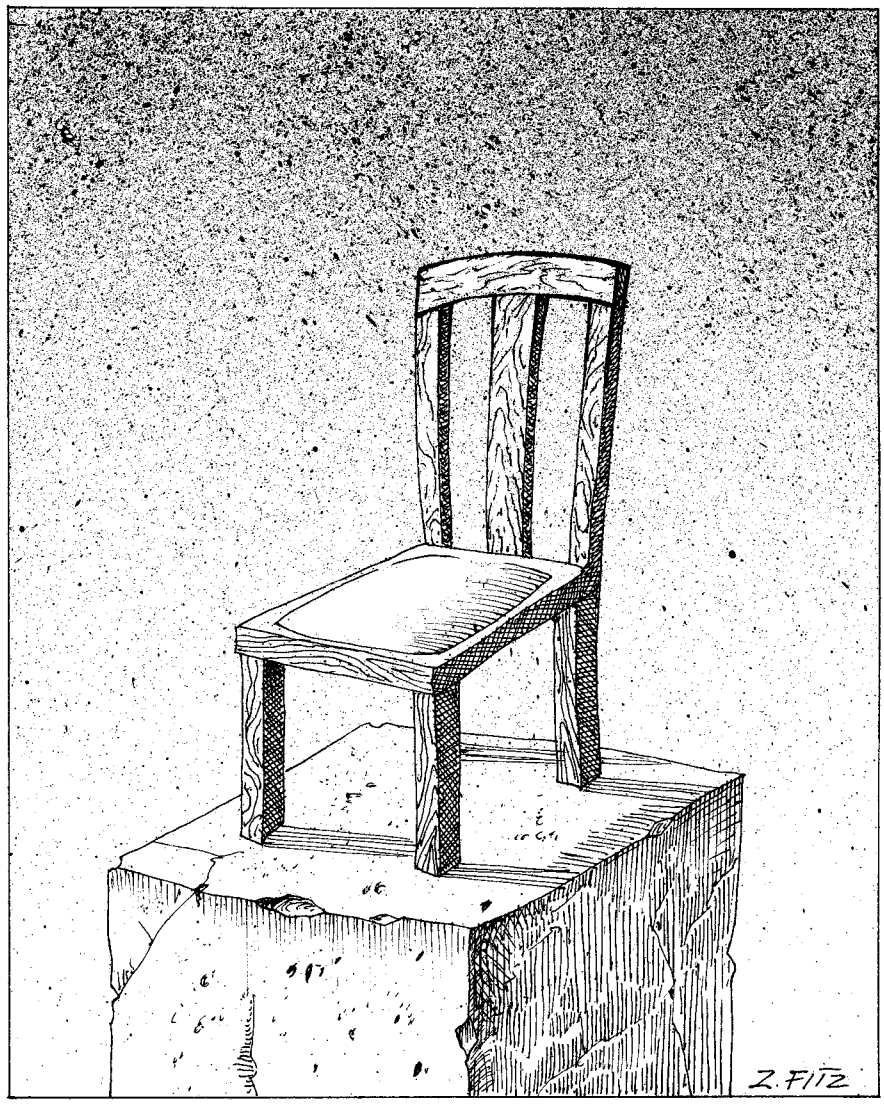
Leslie Stephen: The Godless Victorian **by Noel Annan, Chicago: University of Chicago Press; $14.95.**

Marriage and Morals Among the Victorians **by Gertrude Himmelfarb, New York: Alfred A. Knopf; $19.95.**

Awaiting trial for a murder he did not commit, Dmitri Karamazov is visited in jail in the closing pages of Dostoevsky's *The Brothers Karamazov* by the progressive intellectual Rakitin. Rakitin tries to explain why modern ethics no longer needs religion. "What will become of men then . . . without God and immortal life?" Dmitri wants to know. Rakitin answers that "one can love humanity instead of God." Dmitri remains unconvinced: "Only an idiot can maintain that."

If we accept Dmitri's harsh verdict—and it is surely Dostoevsky's own—then we can hardly reach a more favorable opinion of many of the most prominent leaders of Victorian culture. For by the late 19th century, many leading Victorians shared Matthew Arnold's conviction that religion had lost its credibility for the educated mind and that hereafter our "sense of conduct" must be shaped by "the social idea," expressed in great works of literature and art. As much as they disagreed on other things, Arnold and Carlyle, Eliot and Hardy, Shaw and Morris, Meredith and Mill all agreed on the need for a new moral affirmation not rooted in Christian faith. Leslie Stephen, renowned during his years at Cambridge as a "muscular Christian," came finally to declare: "I now believe in nothing, but I do not the less believe in morality." Similarly, George Eliot found God "inconceivable" and immortality "unbelievable," but Duty remained "peremptory and absolute." In the same vein, some scant paragraphs after rejecting "the Christian Mythus" as implausible, Carlyle affirmed the one precept still binding upon "him who gropes painfully in darkness or uncertain light . . . *'Do the Duty which lies nearest thee.'*"

In his graceful and meticulously researched biography of Leslie Stephen, Noel Annan allows us to see up-close the effects of this profound shift in moral thinking in the life of one prominent Victorian, "a representative, not an aberrant, figure." On the other hand, in the lucid and insightful essays of *Marriage and Morals Among the Victorians*, Gertrude Himmelfarb traces the broader intellectual and social implications of this cultural sea change. Both books can only enhance the already distinguished reputations of their authors as intellectual historians. Together they provide a telling portrait of a generation that largely succeeded in standing at moral attention, like rigid tin soldiers, but whose children broke ranks and started a social riot. Himmelfarb views Victorian morality as "all the more admirable . . . because it tried to maintain itself without the sanctions and consolations of religion," yet there is no escaping the conclusion she reaches after tracing the metamorphosis of this morality "from Glapham to Bloomsbury": "Late-Victorian morality . . . was too impoverished, too far re-



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moved from its original inspiration, to transmit itself to the next generation." The failure of Victorian morality to transcend its generation shows itself nowhere so clearly as in the Stephen family: Like most British intellectuals of his day, Stephen "had no doubt that anything which shook the family, such as adultery, must shake society"; his children, Virginia Woolf and Vanessa Bell, joined with other Bloomsbury intellectuals in self-conscious promiscuity and "The Higher Sodomy."

Stephen may be long remembered for his shrewd literary judgments on Wordsworth, Johnson, and Coleridge; for the pioneering scholarship of his *History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century* (1876); and for his inaugural editorship of the *Dictionary of National Biography*. His Rakitin-like efforts to construct a modern, secular, and scientific basis for morality deserve only quiet oblivion. Seeking a terrestrial decalogue, Stephen argued in *The Science of Ethics* (1882) that virtue developed as the product of evolutionary pressures on society. Social welfare presides as final arbiter of good and evil. No wonder his daughters refused to bow the knee to such an earthbound and impotent deity. Annan, a generally sympathetic biographer, dismisses Stephen's ethics as a "fraudulent" equation that makes "men seeking their own pleasure . . . identical with [men] seeking each other's pleasure." Nor does Annan's own manifest skepticism prevent him from censuring Stephen for his blindness to "the splendors and glories of religion and the infinite variety of ways in which it corresponds to men's needs."

But Stephen's folly in trying "to make the social sciences do the work of religion" was matched by that of other contemporaries likewise looking for surrogate faiths: Mill made a creed out of Utilitarianism; Ruskin and Arnold worshiped Art and Poetry; Spiritualism attracted Alfred Wallace, Arthur Conan Doyle, and Frederick Myers; Shaw and the Webbs burned incense for Socialism; Spencer and Huxley preached a Darwinist gospel; George Eliot and G.H. Lewes followed Comte into Positivism. These substitute faiths seldom wore well. John Stuart Mill suffered a breakdown when his faith in utilitarianism collapsed and had to be supplanted by a less scientific humanism; Ruskin gave up on social regeneration through Art; Beatrice Webb served as panegyrist for Stalin; Wallace chased phrenologists and mesmerists; Spencer ended his life haunted by a vision of "omnipresent death"; Huxley repudiated his hopes that evolution would lead to moral progress.

The cases of Spencer and Huxley loom particularly large. For although not all late Victorians staked their moral philosophy upon evolution, after 1859 no serious ethical thinker could ignore the implications of this new theory. Himmelfarb makes the point that rationalism, naturalism, and utilitarianism had effectively subverted religious orthodoxy long before Darwin. "Darwinism . . . did not so much displace God by man as displace man by nature, moral man by amoral nature." Victorians who had gone to bed convinced they were human *beings* woke up to discover they were merely primates *becoming*. Moral convictions that had looked like sturdy realities vanished into mere curls of smoke rising above the evolutionary fire. Suddenly, the Victorian "Religion of Humanity" carried no more credibility than the Thirty-Nine Articles.

Some quietly resigned themselves to the sterility of this philosophic vista. Darwin himself bade farewell (with some reluctance and pain) to music, poetry, and God—though he doubted "whether the masses were ripe for atheism." The codiscoverer of natural selection, Alfred Wallace, never ripened. We turn away from the embarrassing spectacle of a leading scientist attending seances and promoting pseudo-science, but there is something noble and even heroic in Wallace's insistence that evolution could account for neither Mind, Spirit, Veneration, Hope, Wonder, Ideality, nor Wit. With William Blake, Wallace dared to assert the inadequacy of "a finite organical perception" of "the Human Form Divine." Especially since he could not write poetry like Blake's, Wallace paid the price of intellectual respectability, both in his own day and since.

In the final analysis, though, neither Wallace nor Blake offer a fully credible witness for transcendence. Nor do the Utopians Himmelfarb justly censures for their vehement attacks on Darwin's heirs in the sociobiology movement. We need E.O. Wilson, David Barash, and Konrad Lorenz to remind us of the givenness of our biological nature. What we need more is someone like Pascal, someone who knows that human nature borders on both the brute *and* the angelic and that we ignore either boundary at great peril. But to share Pascal's perspective, we must share his faith. A devout (though Jansenist) Christian as well as a brilliant mathematician, Pascal counted no cranial protrusions, created no private mythology, and sought out no levitating tables.

Spencer and Huxley dispensed with Christianity as cheerfully as they rejected spiritualism, confident that Darwinian evolution would provide a new bulwark for morality. Both made their reputations as writers, not scientists, but both demonstrated something like scientific honesty in their eventual admissions that in fact Darwinism and moral hope could not be reconciled. A relentless systematizer, Spencer pursued his materialist vision as far as it would take him—only to prophesy a universal destiny of "dung and death." Spencer's unflinching candor in confronting this conclusion continues to disturb today's scientific thinkers, including the Nobel laureate and philosopher of science Peter Medawar. "What can have been responsible," Medawar recently asked, without answering, "for the much greater weight [Spencer] gave in his later thought to the phenomena of dissipation and dissolution?"

A more subtle thinker than Spencer, Huxley early professed "the greatest possible antipathy to all the atheistic and infidel school" and scorned "popular anti-theology." Forced to choose between "absolute materialism" and "absolute idealism," Huxley expressed a preference for the latter. Clearly, his moral thought was growing more idealist when in his Romanes Lecture of 1893 he repudiated his former assertion that man's moral impulses could be traced to the "fixed order of nature." Rather, moral behavior meant "a checking of the cosmic process," even "combating it." Huxley left unanswered the question of where man would find the inspiration or guidance for opposing natural forces, but some may take their hint from his designation of his Romanes Lecture as "a very orthodox discourse on the text, 'Satan, the Prince of this world.'" For if Huxley's discourse survives as anything more than a relic in the museum of Victorianism, the reason is that his scriptural "text" points us to truths still living long after we have joined Galsworthy in bidding farewell to "the bier of the Queen, [and] the coffin of the Age."

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Cottage Diplomacy *by Michael Warder*

***Citizen Diplomats: Pathfinders in Soviet-American Relations—And How You Can Join Them* by Gale Warner and Michael Shuman, New York: Continuum.**

The premise of *Citizen Diplomats* by Gale Warner and Michael Shuman, with a foreword by Carl Sagan, is simple: America's elected politicians and professional diplomats have been so inadequate in managing relations with the Soviet Union and coping with the nuclear threat that concerned citizens themselves should do all they can to improve our understanding with the Soviets.

While the book has no bibliography, footnotes, or index, it does contain a 76-page appendix of 38 different categories of U.S./Soviet exchange groups. It is, in short, a kind of motivational tool for antinuclear activists.

Each of the nine chapters tells the story of an individual "pathfinder."

And then, of course, there are the outright lies and distortions that accompany the effort to show visitors the best the USSR has to offer. For 70 years, returning diplomats, journalists, businessmen, and others skilled in the language have documented Soviet capabilities to deceive.

They range from Dr. Bernard Lown, cofounder of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War (IPPNN), to Samantha Smith, perhaps the most politically exploited little girl in the history of US/USSR relations. The idea is to show that everyone can contribute to our better dealings with the Soviets, regardless of age or occupation. Grandmother? Sure. Farmer? Of course. Anyone.

But those who embark on this type of journey are not exactly typical Americans. In the 1950's, Dr. Bernard Lown had memberships in several of the subversive organizations listed in the Walter-McCarran Act. He first journeyed to the Soviet Union in 1968—the year of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia—after meeting a certain Soviet doctor in India in 1966. In 1985 Lown, on behalf of the IPPNN he helped to cofound with this same Soviet doctor, received a Nobel Peace Prize.

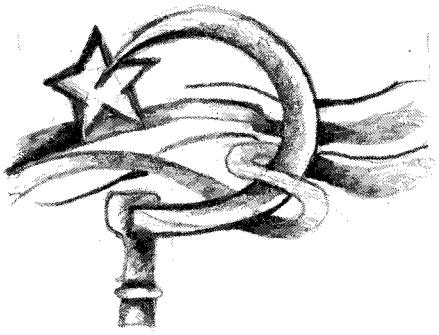
In the mind of Warner & Shuman, Lown is a prototype of the citizen diplomat—an individual citizen who furthered the cause of peace and nuclear disarmament. Perhaps a more realistic interpretation is that he was an alienated American exploited by Moscow professionals to further their foreign policy goals.

The Soviet doctor that Lown met in 1966 in India and in 1968 in Moscow was Yevgeny Chasov. In 1973 Chasov denounced Nobel Peace Laureate Andrei Sakharov in the Soviet press. About the same time he became head physician to the members of the Politburo. Since 1982 Chasov has been a member of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. Clearly, he was under strict party discipline and no private citizen.

Elena Bonner (*Alone Together*) raises the chilling prospect that Dr. Chasov may well have been personally responsible for the decision to brutally force-feed her husband, Andrei Sakharov, in 1984, when he was on a hunger strike. Given Chasov's proximity to the Politburo, his field (cardiology), Sakharov's illness of the heart, and the importance of Dr. Sakharov, Chasov's involvement seems plausible. Nonetheless, the Soviets scored a great propaganda coup by having their native son, a top party leader, Chasov, receive the Nobel Peace Prize.

Then there is the case of grandmother Sharon Tennison, age 50. Her disillusionment with American politics after the assassinations of the Kennedys and Martin Luther King was followed by a religious search. She went through two marriages and passed through two religions to "something universal." It was around that time that she joined Physicians for Social Responsibility (PSR) and from these experiences determined she had to go to the Soviet Union to see for herself what the Soviets were like. After all, how could she claim they are just like us if she had never been there?

While in the USSR, Mrs. Tennison first learned of Leonard Peltier, an American Indian serving consecutive life sentences in a U.S. federal prison. In the Soviet Union, Mr. Peltier is celebrated as the moral equivalent of Andrei Sakharov in exile. Mrs. Tennison apparently now believes that Mr. Peltier's human rights have been abused because he was leading the Indians against the U.S. government in a just cause. She does not give credence to his criminal conviction for the deaths of two federal agents. So, the next time we hear of 10,000 or so political prisoners in the Soviet Union, we should remember Mr. Peltier. Soviet



guides do not just show visitors the Soviet Union—they also explain the United States to them.

There is a vast literature of visitors to the Soviet Union attempting, like Sharon Tennison, to learn the truth about the Soviets. Paul Hollander (*Political Pilgrims*) has explained why many alienated Westerners visiting the Soviet Union fail to see even what is apparent. First, there is the dissatisfaction with America followed by the "willing suspension of disbelief" (apologies to Coleridge) upon entering the Soviet Union. This willingness to see the positive is further enhanced by techniques of hospitality. The visitors are catered to as important visiting officials. When the system inevitably fails and the food is rotten, for example, well, just look at how hard these Soviets try! How can one speak ill of them? And then, of course, there are the outright lies and distortions that accompany the effort to show visitors the best the USSR has to offer. For 70 years, returning diplomats, journalists, businessmen, and others skilled in the language have documented Soviet capabilities to deceive. Nonetheless, Grandmother Tennison has led about 20 different groups to the Soviet Union to see what the Soviets are really like and to help others see the same.

Current exchanges, the aftermath of the Reagan/Gorbachev 1985 Summit, have been anything but reciprocal, despite treaty stipulations to that effect. In 1986, 80,000 Americans went to the

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USSR, while only 6,500 Soviets came here. In 1976 (before Afghanistan), 66,000 Americans went to the Soviet Union, and 12,000 Soviets visited us. The numbers do not tell the whole story—the Soviet visitors are exclusively party members who've been rigorously checked, or experts held in line by keeping their family in the Soviet Union or by other behavior-modifying ploys. American visitors are for the most part curious amateurs put on guided tours. Apparently *glasnost* does not extend to letting average Soviets travel abroad.

In the introduction, the authors try to deal with the objection that citizen diplomacy can't affect the Soviet government because there is no real public opinion in the USSR. They conclude this section by implying that the Soviets stopped their nuclear testing (since resumed), eliminated the French and British nuclear forces from arms talks with the U.S., and proposed a 50 percent reduction in nuclear weapons because of citizen diplomacy. They do not attempt to show *how* citizen diplomacy has brought about these results. Nowhere do they credit the Reagan administration or the strong mandate it received from the American people in 1980 and 1984 for any of these changes in Soviet negotiating postures. This last point is rather important since the purported need for citizen diplomacy is based on the ineffectiveness of elected officials and professional diplomats.

Another premise of citizen diplomacy is that a peace web to preclude war can be woven if enough personal and business relations are formed between citizens of the two countries. A high volume of contacts and trade is thus seen as a factor in fostering peace. Yet the number of contacts and the flow of trade between Germany and the Soviet Union just before Germany attacked the USSR in 1941 was never greater. In fact, perhaps those contacts were one reason the Soviets were surprised at the German attack. Rather than preventing war, personal contacts and trade, even the "nonaggression" pact of 1939, likely misled Stalin into thinking Hitler was his ally in carving up Europe. This web of relations was not an obstacle to Hitler's decision to attack, and there is much evidence to show it was nothing but a smoke screen.

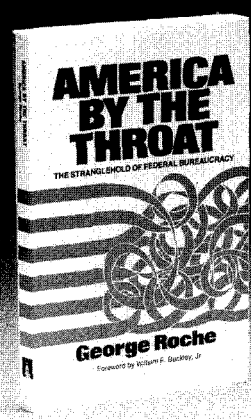
Many citizen diplomats, perhaps bearing a sense of guilt about Mr. Peltier, do not see the lack of human rights in the Soviet Union as an important problem that should concern Americans. The ones who do usually contend that there is a more pressing problem: preventing nuclear war. It is to Andrei Sakharov's credit that he widely publicized the idea that greater freedom and democracy in the Soviet Union would inhibit Soviet leaders from waging nuclear war. Militant, secretive nations are more apt to go to war than countries with freedom of expression, public opinion, real elections, open emigration, and the like. If this proposition is true, it may well be that Gorbachev's Soviet Union is less apt to go to war than a Brezhnev-type Soviet Union.

Nonetheless, any conclusions about *glasnost* and *perestroika* are premature. After all, Khrushchev's "public airing" and "restructuring" of the early 1960's did not prevent the building of the Berlin Wall, the effort to put missiles in Cuba, nor the explosion of a 57 megaton hydrogen bomb, the largest in history, which broke a three-year moratorium. Moreover, party leaders deposed Khrushchev.

These are sober facts to consider in the midst of all the enthusiasm about current developments in the Soviet Union. The American citizen diplomatic corp continues to multiply and whip up even greater excitement. Their trips to the USSR are misrepresented as a cause of seemingly positive developments in the USSR. Yet one can't help but feel the need for historical perspective and more modesty about the possibility of individual American citizens changing the foreign policies of any major foreign power, least of all the Soviet Union. The Soviet empire's *raison d'être*, its party platform, its social structure, its military force, and its economy since 1917 have all been geared toward the global expansion of their system. And exchanging musicians, bicycling and climbing mountains together, and so on are not likely to change the direction of Soviet foreign policy.

Michael Warder is executive vice president of The Rockford Institute.

AMERICA BY THE THROAT:
THE STRANGLEHOLD OF FEDERAL BUREAUCRACY
by George Roche



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Letter From Ecuador

by Geoffrey Wagner

The Middle of the World

Chimborazo, Cotopaxi, Cayambe, Antisana, Tungurahua — the jaw-cracking, eye-chart names thunder from the map with the grandeur of the 6,000-meter, snow-capped volcanoes most of them are, staking out the spine of the Ecuadorian Andes, some of the world's finest scenery. Indeed, no fewer than 11 such *nevados* may be seen on a clear day from the Latacunga valley south of the capital, Quito, half their height and blessed with an almost unchanging climate of perpetual spring. For the past decade my wife and I have annually visited Ecuador and found it as visual feast. It has the advantage of almost no tourism at all, beyond the usually serious groups going from the port of Guayaquil, the least-attractive place in the country, to the wildlife preserve in the Galápagos Islands 600 miles off its shores. Above all, Ecuador is peopled by an astonishingly friendly peasantry. Un-self-conscious in national costume, they go about their daily chores. By South American standards, there is a minimum of vendors, drug-dealers, hustlers, and petty thieves. It makes for sumptuous motoring.

Traveling by car is the best way to see the country. There is a single-track railroad which winds scenically north to south, but it's a fairly tough ride, except perhaps for the occasional young backpacker (who all seem to gather, for some reason, at the inland spa called *Baños*, which means a "john" as well as a "bath"). Ecuador has oil in the interior, and gas is risibly inexpensive, one U.S. dollar recently buying four gallons and taxis in Quito starting at a few cents. Even so, bus drivers complain, and a recent strike that had the roads sprinkled with *miguelitos* (three-pronged nails guaranteed to sink into any tire) forced us to hold up in the north at a hacienda full of horses. We were not unduly incommoded. There are seven million people in Ecuador, almost every one of them on horseback; I was taken out, across reasonably rough country (involving jumping), by an 84-year-old Indian or a little girl of eight or a combination of the two.

Quite simply, Ecuador is superbly provincial. It is mainly an agricultural country getting on with its own business, untroubled by so many woes of the outside world. It lacks sophistication, and, as applies in most of South America, forget about high gastronomy. Even so, a north-to-south drive can involve staying at several handsome colonial properties, now restored as hotels, dating back to the 17th century. The northernmost of these, not far from the Colombian border (heavily policed), is Chorlavi, a fine hacienda with rooms and a pool. South of it (an hour from Quito) is the Cúsin hacienda, whose site by the San Pablo lake surpasses that of Cumberland and is far less inhabited; Cúsin, where Bolivar spent a night, was recently bought by an energetic Australian and his lovely Quiteña wife; its flagged stairs and passages are enhanced by ecclesiastical artifacts of quality, and the owners' hospitality is such that you feel more of a country-house guest than a hotel client. Like everything in Ecuador, it is absurdly cheap.

An hour south of the capital, near Latacunga, the 17th-century property of the Marquis of La Cienega has now been converted into a hotel with 12 rooms. With its sunny patios, fountains, and pepper-tree walkway, this is an architectural gem but, at least on my last two visits, a gastronomical disaster. It boasts its own family chapel with a vast bell cast for the Virgin of the Rosary after seven eruptions of nearby Cotopaxi had spared the estate in the 18th century. Needless to say, at such places there are all the horses you want to ride.

Southwards stretches rolling Tyrolean countryside of great charm and scant population, most of the traffic hiving down for Rio Bamba (a boring place that belies its exotic name), Ambato, and eventually Cuenca, which is a fairly intact Spanish colonial town. The roads are reasonably good, notably the *panamericana*, though nothing like those in Chile or the Argentine; they are, however, poorly marked, when at all so, and frequently abruptly end. Local motoring maps are hopeless, and the few police in evidence are often as ignorant of road conditions as the nearest peasants who travel in slow buses. In the first half of 1983, 12 feet of rain fell near the village of Chunchi and buried alive some 200; more or less the whole hillside came down and is still being repaired so that you have to time your trip to get through at noon, when bulldozers clear a track. *Baños*, where a modest room with three beds cost us less than $10, leads to some spectacular gorge scenery at Puyo and on to the jungle proper.

All these towns have, of course, bustlingly authentic markets, thronged with Indians and derby-hatted matrons presiding over shiny vegetables, simmering pots, and doomed poultry. Few tourists and no pestering or pickpocketing. All the same, most of these markets are for *viveres* or daily living. We were recommended to visit Saquisili but found it an unattractive sprawl of a town offering mostly cheap factory goods and kitchen utensils. Unlike Peru, Ecuador does not really have a strong, tasteful folk art (except, perhaps, the market at Otavolo in the north, which specializes in cheap ponchos and woolens). At nearby Cotacachi you can pick up leather goods for a quarter of their Fifth Avenue prices, but Ecuador still sells mainly to itself, not to tourists, while local attempts at fine art, in the form of wood carvings or ornaments made of bread, struck me as indescribably ugly and un-Ecuadorian.

Twenty-five kilometers from Cuenca, beside the river at Paute, Ecuador's only luxury resort opened in 1982. We were the first guests of the Hosteria Uzhupud, created around a ruined rum factory of some antiquity and offering tennis,

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swimming, racquetball, sauna, horses, chapel, and cock-fighting pit. The genial manager, quite the tallest Ecuadorian I have seen, showed us to a large double room costing $20 (without meals). On our last visit he had left and the place gone into decline, being for some reason overrun by a group of German schoolchildren.

Striking out west towards Ecuador's Pacific coast may depend on the rental of a four-wheel drive vehicle. Towns like Quevedo, set in banana fields, are really no more than route centers, run-down conglomerations of characterless stores redolent of Graham Greene at his worst. The coast beyond is mostly dirty and sad, though at Bahia, an otherwise desolate spot on the south side of an inlet, a small hotel (the Herradura) had unexpectedly exceptional food, perhaps due to the Americans and Japanese coming in from their shrimp farms along the estuary. The interior decorator, who must have studied Dada, had gone in heavily for Victorian ironmongery painted dull black. Navigating the corridors to our room at night and being clouted by some old sewing machine or flat iron, I found myself longing for radar. I suspect the same Olde Iron hand to have done the decor, too, at the pleasant Rumpibamba hotel at Salcedo in the center of the island, where we found a group of cheerful Brits comfortably quartered as they sold arms to Ecuador. There were, in fact, more English about than expected — they can't get into the Argentine, don't forget — and dart boards were common in bars.

North of scruffy Quevedo lies Santo Domingo, another road hub, this one an easy and lovely mountain drive from the capital. It has become something of a tourist trap thanks to the nearby settlement of Colorado Indians, who paste their hair and faces with red mud. I did not find their enclave especially edifying nor their chief, when I met him, sober. There is a similar isolated group of Cayapa Indians in the north, but of the nearest hotel or lodging to them the excellent *South American Handbook* cautions, "We have been warned of sexual attacks by the owner." *Caveat emptor.*

A few minutes out of Santo Domingo, a now elderly Ecuadorian, Señor Tinalandia, married to an equally elderly and delightfully eccentric white Russian aristo, owns a vast property either side of a trout stream. The inconspicuous roadside restaurant, or mess shack, of his name hardly commends itself, but an overnight stay in one of the log cabins high up on idyllic tropical parkland behind is well worth the price of admission. This is grandiose, isolated Andean country, and on it the owner had created an astonishing 18-hole golf course, whose hazards include his horses bathing in lily ponds. "For whom?" I asked him. "For myself," he replied gruffly. However, Tinalandia is booked solid most weekends, our cabin having been occupied every Sunday for the past 20 years by a dentist from the capital.

But Quito is the pearl. Sprawling across the equator in a magnificent setting, unsullied by suburbs, it is divided between the intact colonial Quito annually whitewashed and belonging to the Indians and the modern part with its shopping malls or *centros commerciales* common to most South American cities. There are none of the slums that so disfigure Lima or Caracas.

Old Quito is a grouping of superb baroque churches and convents, rivaling the best of Mexican churrigueresque. On the central Plaza de la Independencia stand the National Palace and Cathedral where Marshal Sucre, architect of Ecuadorian independence, is entombed. But the two principal places of worship are the 16th-century San Francisco, on the square of that name, and the Jesuit Compañia around the corner, begun in 1605. Both are marvels of colonial baroque, all red and gold; the latter, with its fantastic Legarda altar, is one of the finest such colonial examples in South America.

No one can say the faith is dying in Ecuador. There are 86 churches in Quito alone, and those we visited were invariably full. We could hardly squeeze into the Compañia just after the Pope had been shot. Indeed, to see many of these polychrome interiors, we must have averaged a dozen masses a day and had our hands wrung by neighbors till we could feel them no more. In the Compañia, in particular, I saw Indian mothers not merely rubbing but scrubbing their infants' faces against a polished log crucifix until they bawled. On either side of the central nave are shrines to saints visited by entire Indian families at a time — including their cats and dogs. (Overheard in front of one: "I burnt a big candle to you last week and you didn't grant my wish, so I'm not buying another for you now.") These shrines perform the role of miracle worker, adviser, and confidant at once. Even so, I was surprised, standing at the entrance to the Compañia one noon, to see a businessman step in with briefcase, sign himself, tug up his trousers, and kneel; he then dragged himself laboriously all the way up the nave to the main altar, complete with case. This was no mendicant *indio triste* but a collar-and-tie type, an Ecuadorian yuppie, possibly a banker, performing lunch-hour penance.

Nor should the cloisters around these churches be missed, either. Step off the busy streets of old Quito into La Merced or San Augustin and you are in another world, one of incredible quiet. "Teach us to sit still," as T.S. Eliot had it. These places do. San Augustin contains the Chapter Hall of independence and one superbly gilded hallway leading to it.

Quito is well provided with hotels, all within 10 minutes of the airport (though a new strip is being constructed farther off). We chose the Intercontinental with its view over the lovely Guápolo sanctuary (closed to visitors) and long Cumbaya valley northward to the Cayambe volcano. To hear the cracked, 17th-century bells of the Guápolo while the Set Decorator of the universe responds to the changing hues of sunset on the snow with some finishing touches to the sky is a rare experience, indeed.

The Intercontinental, too, has a rooftop Techo del Mundo restaurant from which all this can be seen, though its food is not up to much. One does not go to Ecuador to eat, excepting king-size steaks (there are no meatless days as in Peru). Michelin would scatter few flowers around Quito, where, frankly, the best tables are often in the hands of foreigners. The restaurant of the Chalet Suisse, a hotel run by a French Swiss, has been notoriously reliable in our opinion, while an English couple, Rosemary and Peter Bailey, presently offer quite the most sophisticated menus in town at Bailey's, which is in fact their own house. Most of these restaurants are quite small, and there is no sidewalk café life in Quito — you have to go to Buenos Aires for that. Ecuador has few specialties. Its seafood, sent up from Guayaquil, is excellent. *Llapingachos* are mashed potatoes fried with egg and breadcrumbs around a center of melted cheese. *Sopa de pata* is not, as some tourists seem to

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think, potato soup but paw soup (viz. pig's trotter). Steaks and eggs abound, frequently in combination. Hot toasted corn — *maìs* — is served, unpopped, with aperitifs. Remarkably inexpensive Chilean wines form the staple of most wine lists. It is not a great gastronomy. It is great countryside. We settle for that.

Geoffrey Wagner is a retired City College English professor who travels widely in South America.

Letter From the Lower Right

by John Shelton Reed

Goetzing Down in the Gunfire State

Last October 1, Florida's new handgun law went into effect and the talking hairdos on the evening news had an arched-eyebrow contest. As you may have heard, law-abiding Floridians, tired of being an unarmed minority in the Sunshine State, rared back and passed a law that allows any Floridian with no police record, $145, and two hours to spare for token instruction to get a permit to carry a concealed weapon. Moreover, for a while at least, thanks to a loophole in the law that no one seemed to be rushing to repeal, it appeared that *anyone* would be allowed to pack a pistol in plain view.

Florida, of all places. Who'd have thought it? The least Southern of the Southern states. But I guess a full-page ad in *Southern Living* magazine a couple of years ago should have told us something like this was coming. It was for the National Rifle Association, and it showed a Cuban-American Florida state legislator fondling his pistol and saying he wouldn't give it up without a fight because he knows what it's like to live under Communist tyranny. This isn't the image *Southern Living* usually tries to project, but it does look a lot like life, at least as far as Florida's concerned. Those of us who still think of Miami as a retirement home for old Trotskyite garment-workers from the lower East Side are at least 20 years out of date. South Florida has more Cubans and Nicaraguans than retired New Yorkers these days, and some of those guys are real Americans.

Now, I should say that my Second Amendment fundamentalist friends find me squishy-soft on the subject of handguns. I tend to believe that we compromised the constitutional principle when we gave up the right to carry automatic weapons, bazookas, and flame-throwers, and I've always thought that anything legal you can do with a pistol, you can do as well or better with a long gun. You can shoot varmints with a .22, protect your home with a shotgun, resist tyranny with a deer rifle. About the only thing a .38 is better for is knocking over liquor stores, and it would be all right with me if we outlawed handguns altogether. (That is, if my state did — your state can do what it pleases. That's what federalism is all about.)

But I must say the right people are upset by Florida's new law. Maybe it's worth a try. A friend of mine who drives a tow truck told me recently about going out at night to pull a car out of a ditch. "There was two of them there when I got there, but must have been 10 after I got it out. They said they wasn't going to pay me — no way. So I reached back and got my shotgun and told them: 'I'm taking this car in, and you all can get it back when you bring the money.'"

Did they pay up? "They come in the next day."

Did he always take his gun along? "I don't leave home without it. You know, people are so *mean* these days."

Robert Heinlein has observed that an armed society is a polite society — and Lord knows Florida can use all the civility it can muster. But plainly the guardians of our civic morality are less scandalized by how *mean* people are these days than by what Floridians are doing about it. So keep your eye on how this experiment is evaluated by the media.

No fair saying next year that Miami has the highest murder rate in the U.S., if not the Western Hemisphere. It has that already.

No fair, either, saying that more murders next year are committed with handguns. That may happen, if only because people won't have to use sloppy, slow, unreliable methods like knifing, strangling, or bludgeoning. The state-by-state statistics suggest that tough gun laws mean mostly that crimes of passion get committed with other weapons; where there's a will, there's a way.

No, the statistic to watch is total homicides, however committed, excluding those in self-defense. Why exclude those? Because that's the point: Floridians apparently intend for some different folks to die now. Folks that deserve it. It remains to be seen whether it works that way or not, but would it be a bad thing if it did?

The fact of the matter is that Floridians don't display much in the way of enlightened liberal concern for the lives of scum. It was in Florida, after all, that an oft-burglarized storekeeper was acquitted last year for rigging a booby trap that electrocuted a young share-the-wealth activist. Florida is right up there with Texas in legal executions, too; you might say that this new law just extends the definition and, ah, privatizes the process.

Some other statistics we might want to check out in a year or so are those for robbery, burglary, and rape. When the law went into effect, the network news shows all carried interviews with young women on firing ranges saying things like "If somebody tries to rape me I'm going to blow him away." I wouldn't be surprised if some rapists move to New York. As drive-in movie critic Joe Bob Briggs observes: "There's something about a woman in a bikini with a machine gun strapped across her chest that says, 'Hey, women are people, too.'" Maybe pocketbooks that might hold Smith and Wessons can get the same message across. The old Colt .45 wasn't called "the Equalizer" for nothing.

A book you probably haven't seen reviewed in the mainstream press presents some evidence to back me up. In *Armed and Considered Dangerous*, James Wright and Peter Rossi report the results of interviews with nearly two thousand felons, doing time in the prisons of 10 states. A majority of these experts agreed that criminals avoid potential victims they believe to be armed, and two out of five had themselves decided in the past not to commit a crime for that reason. Three-quarters agreed that burglars avoid occupied houses for fear of being shot, and over a third had actually been scared off, shot at, or captured by an armed victim. (These gentlemen, by the way, had had no difficulty obtaining weapons, even under restrictive laws, but over 80 percent of those who had used guns to commit crimes said that if they couldn't

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get handguns they'd switch to more deadly sawed-off rifles or shotguns.)

So, as I said, Florida's experiment is worth a try. I do have one suggestion, though. It's a mushy, liberal, Great Society kind of proposal, probably just a reflex left over from the bad company I kept in the 60's, but I can't help it.

Look here: the price of a good pistol, plus $145 for a permit, plus two hours of lessons — that's a lot to ask from poor folks. They're probably the ones who need protection the most, too. They've got no perimeter alarms, no chain-link fences, no Dobermans between them and the predators. Do we want them driven to bootleg dealers, to back-alley armorers? To Saturday-night specials that blow up in your hand? Of course not. I say if we can put a man on the moon, we can put a decent weapon in every glove compartment. Come on, Florida — how about gun subsidies for the poor?

John Shelton Reed is armed, but not dangerous, in Chapel Hill, North Carolina.

Letter From Albion

by Andrei Navrozov

Anatomy of a Swindle

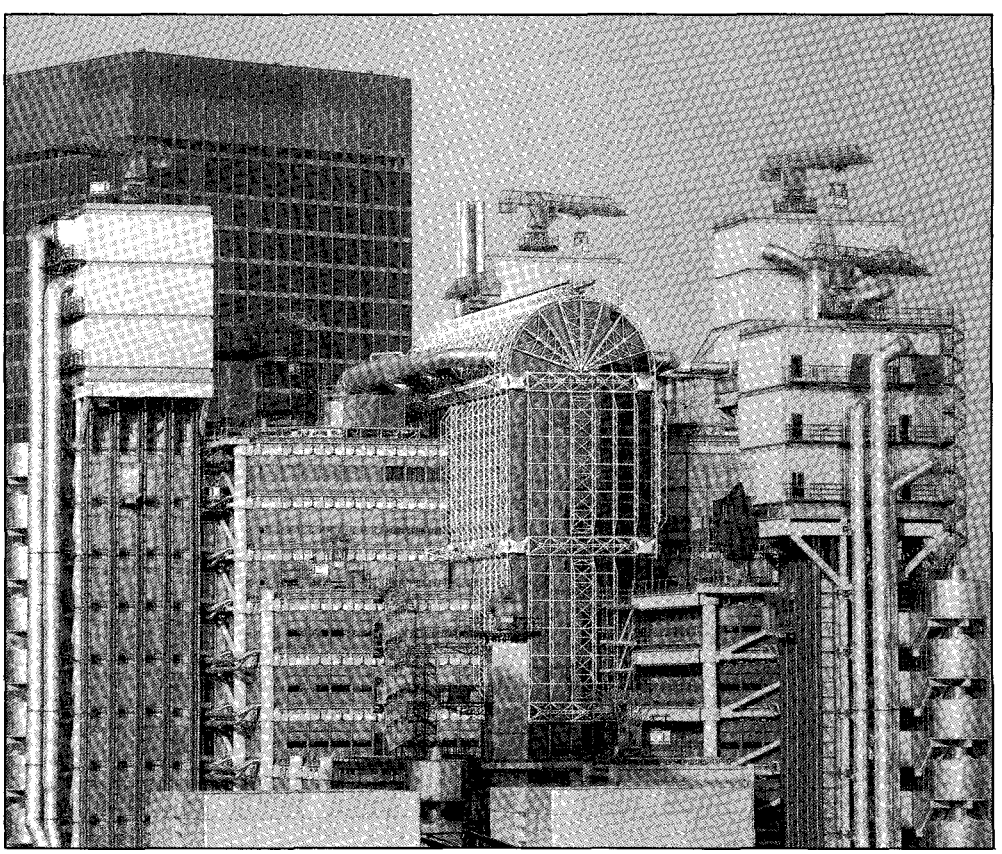
I never thought I would be a sucker for royalty, but there is now a good reason to admire Prince Charles. He hates Richard Rogers.

In August, the British press reported on the dismay of the nation's "architectural profession, flinching at the prospects of another outburst along the lines of 'monstrous carbuncle' (the Prince's dismissal of an extension at the National Gallery), 'glass stump' (his view of a plan for Mansion House Square), and 'Victorian prison' (his description of a new Plessey factory in Plymouth)." Apparently, Prince Charles has intervened in plans for a multimillion dollar project to redevelop the "area" around St. Paul's Cathedral. The "area" in question happens to be London's oldest and most beautiful, and the Prince's concern was clear to all, including those who had watched his wedding at St. Paul's six years earlier. Except, of course, for the nation's architectural profession: "Architects are getting fed up with the Prince's interference," said Michael Manser, a past president of the Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA), adding: "The trouble is, he has tremendous influence among people generally." One proposal, favored by the judges, called for a ring of office blocks around the cathedral. Another favorite, still undisclosed at this writing, was an entry by Richard Rogers and Partners.

Richard Rogers is the subject of this column because of a coincidence. A few weeks ago, I happened to review the press clippings and public relations department memoranda of Lloyd's of London, whose new city headquarters Rogers designed, over the period of 10 years: from the inception of the project to its completion. What is true of Rogers, it seems, is true of much of today's architecture, art, and literature.

By 1977, when our story begins, Lloyd's of London had been an internationally famous insurance market and a financial power second only to the Bank of England for nearly a century. It started, 300 years ago this year, as a riverside coffeehouse, where merchant seamen could exchange shipping gossip and later obtain insurance cover for their vessels and cargo. Despite the passing of centuries, Lloyd's (incorporated as "a society of underwriters" by an Act of Parliament in 1871) had brought its unique tradition into the 20th century, refusing to become a limited-liability company and remaining, essentially, a place — where its members, liable to the full extent of their personal fortunes, could gather and do business. Since the membership continued to grow, it was not surprising that between 1928 and 1977 the bustling marketplace had outgrown its physical surroundings four times. This time, it all began with a lunch.

The idea was to seek "professional advice," and a deputy chairman of Lloyd's found himself sharing the intellectual equivalent of celery soup with Gordon Graham, then president of the august RIBA. His "professional advice" was simple enough: a list of six architectural practices. From these, Richard Rogers and Partners was eventually chosen. The six participants received, under the conditions of the competition the wise Mr. Graham devised, 10,000 pounds



Lloyd's historic low profile gives way to architect Richard Roger's imposing inside-out design.

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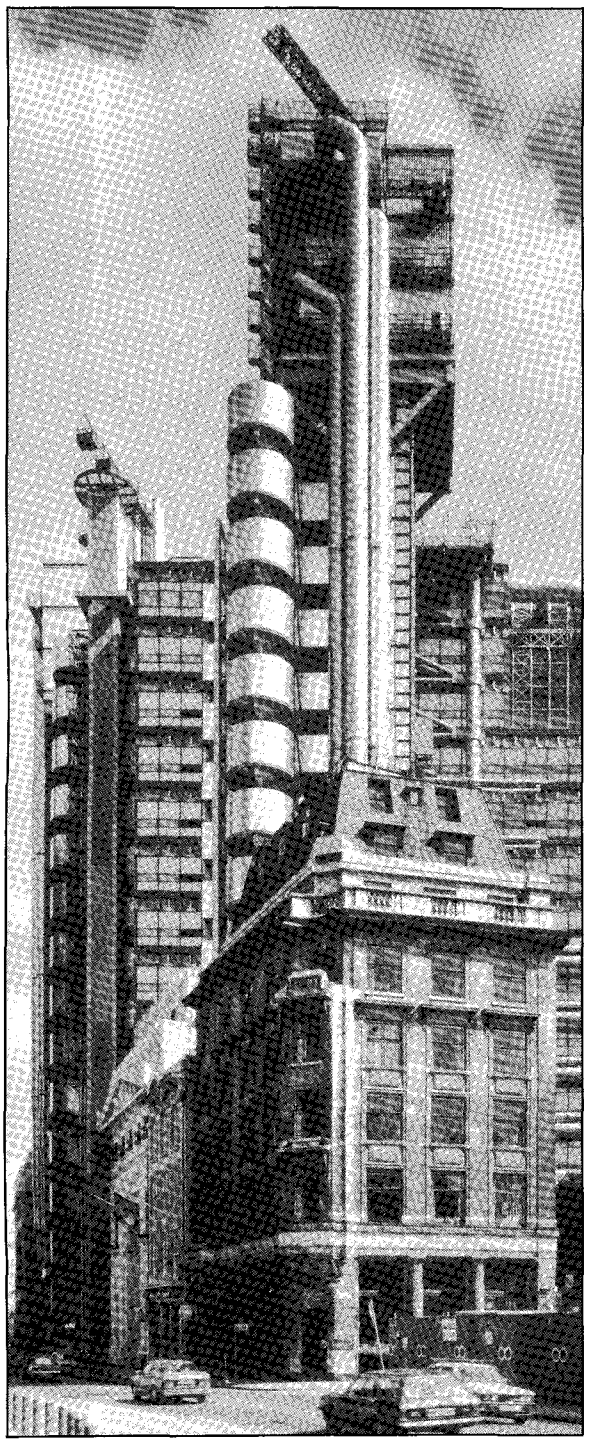
each to come up with — no, not designs (how vulgar!) — with *ideas*.

At first, Lloyd's redevelopment committee was a little nervous. After all, the Yale master's-course graduate's main claim to fame was a little frightening. But Mr. Graham was reassuring: "I don't know what you'll get," he is reported to have told the committee with the kind of vague optimism that is born of experience, "but you won't get a Pompidou."



Lloyd's from the corner of Leadenhall and Bishopsgate, with 1928 retained entrance at left.

Alas, a Pompidou, like the Pompidou Rogers had designed with Renzo Piano, was what they were in for. In essence, the notion was innocuous enough: to take Louis Kahn's idea of separating the "served" space of the proposed building's main atrium from the "servant" space around it, and then take it to its logical — or, tragically for Lloyd's, illogical — conclusion. Admittedly, the client's brief to the architect did call for the creation of a single vast space, the "Room," or floor, where the members could do their trading as they had done it for the past three centuries. But while Rogers' steel-and-glass barrel-vaulted atrium, 15 stories high, would preserve that tradition, the proposed "inside-out" design violated every other tradition dear to the city: "Traditional buildings are dinosaurs," Rogers told them. "Architecture is inseparable from ideology."

Of all the quiet, conservative, staid institutions in the city of London, Lloyd's had enjoyed the reputation of having the lowest profile, at least comparatively with its historic role. But, as history would have it, just about then the old club was attracting the unhappy attentions of government regulators. In the face of expected parliamentary intervention in its affairs, Lloyd's reasoned, it was probably a good idea to be seen, at home as well as abroad, as a great international institution, rather than an "elitist" meeting place. The glass, "inside-out," democratic facade was just the thing.

I interviewed one of Rogers' partners, John Young. Around the table in his Hammersmith office overlooking the Thames were four chairs: three angular and spiked affairs, in one of which I had to sit, and his own, a comfortable swivel armchair of the kind used by doctors, accountants, and other ordinary people. (His secretary, a pert young thing of the kind doctors, accountants, and other ordinary people employ, had told me how he designed the three chairs, so I kept quiet on this score.) Smiling with satisfaction, Mr. Young, responsible for the actual construction of the Lloyd's building, recalled those "early days" on the site: "Lloyd's didn't know what sort of building they were going to get."

In those "early days," the client received monthly reports from the architects, outlining the progress of the design, and approved it little by little. It may be recalled how successfully this "incremental" technique was used by the tailors in Hans Christian Andersen's fairy tale. Two years later, when the model was at last unveiled, "it wasn't as if [Lloyd's] hadn't been a party to all the decisions," Mr. Young told me, "and so they accepted it. If we had gone in and said 'Here's the model,' they would have sent us on our way." By 1979, the architects were so much in control that they were able to convince the client to appoint a Fine Arts Advisory Panel. Architects often have artistic friends. In fact, it is surprising that Andersen's tailors never asked one of their friends to design invisible shoes.

When, seven years later, the new Lloyd's building was ready, the differences, in the words of a *Private Eye* correspondent, "between the Tomb of Unknown Pompidou and the Lloyd's Reinsurance Refinery" became apparent: "The former was a duet between Piano and Rogers, the latter is Rogers' own bravura composition for wind and brass." Surely, asked a *Financial Mail* reporter, "the underwriters' activities at Lloyd's deserve expression ahead of the technical systems that support them?" At Lloyd's itself, city wits observed that it took them three centuries to move from a coffeehouse to a percolator.

On November 18, 1986, to the strains of Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* adding that international-democratic touch, the Queen launched the "surreal engine of the mind," in one writer's phrase. The October 1986 issue of *Architectural Review*, published by RIBA, had just proclaimed, in one of its 10 articles on the new building, that it was the greatest masterpiece of architecture "to have arisen in the City of London since Sir Christopher Wren finally put the gold cross in the sky above St. Paul's." Unlike her outspoken son, who had compared the National Gallery extension to "a monstrous carbuncle on the face of a much-loved friend," the Queen chose not to notice the intellectual nakedness of her subjects, noting merely that the building was "unlike any other."

On second thought, even her subjects did not seem to have had much choice in the matter.

Andrei Navrozov is poetry editor of Chronicles.

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Letter From the Heartland

by Jane Greer

You Can Lead a Horse to Water

I came across Mitch Snyder's name the other day. Remember Mitch? He made the news first about three years ago, when, as head of the Community for Creative Non-Violence (CCNV), a Washington-based "homeless rights" group, he spoke out against the indignities perpetrated against 61-year-old Jesse Carpenter, who "froze to death in the shadow of the White House." Snyder called Carpenter's death "unconscionable" and said it dramatized the need for shelters for the homeless. Since then he's been in the papers occasionally advocating the same cause, most recently last week, and it made me think of Bob.

I'll call him Bob here, but I don't know his real name. He now lives in Bismarck. On sweltering days this summer I saw him sleeping in Interstate-exit ditches at the north end of town, or propped up on two gigantic Coleman coolers near the Post Office, his back against a light pole, hands behind his head, folding chair forgotten behind him.

Bob is black, so he's probably not a long-time North Dakotan: We have only a handful of black families in this state. Clearly, then, he came here from somewhere else, God alone knows why. Just as clearly, he's heard of our winters and doesn't intend to be caught off-guard, because when it was 102 and cattle were dying in the fields, we found Bob dressed in what he's *always* dressed in: a brown snowmobile suit, bright yellow rubber raincoat and rain pants under that, jeans and who knows what else under *that*. I know at least the three top layers because the top two are slit carefully across his backside and flap as he walks.

Bob travels with only his lawn chair and coolers and a ghetto-blaster. What's in the coolers is a mystery, but they support him in his frequent and obviously satisfying naps. He hangs out at the Post Office, hurting no one, talking or humming to himself, just standing around. Several downtown churches let him use their bathrooms to wash in. What he eats, I don't know, but surely Bismarck garbage cans hold no slimmer pickings than those anywhere else in prodigal America; Bob is a healthy-looking man.

I've done some checking. The Salvation Army has a new building full of dorm rooms, but they can take care of people for only a few days. They didn't think Bob had come in. The police said that if they saw Bob sleeping in the ditch, they'd have to move him along but weren't equipped to take care of him. There's a brand-new home for the homeless in Bismarck, but, at least for now, Bob's not living there. The state Human Services Department said that Bob would be the county's responsibility, and the county said that they were powerless to do anything unless Bob came in and *asked* for help.

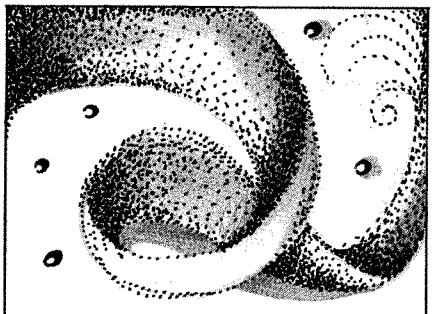
I can imagine what Mitch Snyder would make of all this. "Another one fallen through the crack," he'd write; "just another case of bureaucratic insensitivity, of government irresponsibility."

I say, Where is Bob's family—and what if he *likes* living this way?

It's odd—Jesse Carpenter, frozen stiff in the shadow of the White House, had a wife and a couple of kids he left 20 years before he drank himself to death. Mitch Snyder left a $50,000-a-year job, a wife, and a family to go into the real world and do good (with a little time in prison for attempted robbery). If his kids decide Dad left them because they're worthless and become street people, will he consider them government property? Snyder is the same kind of symbol as Jesse Carpenter and Bob, only he doesn't know it, and he's not exactly part of the *solution*, if you catch my drift. Where there is no God, as Chesterton said, all is permitted. Where there is no family life, all is neglected.

This being said, there's a lot of evidence that Bob is happy, and no evidence that he's hurting himself or anyone else. He told my priest that he got $300 a month, knew that he could get clothes at the Salvation Army, knew where he could stay if he wanted to, was looking for just the right apartment, and wasn't especially looking for a job. Winter's coming, and yes, in spite of the snowmobile suit, I worry about where he'll sleep, but not obsessively. Bob is part of the larger Family of Man, of course, but it's my job to worry about the much smaller Family of Mine first, something Mitch Snyder doesn't understand.

Jane Greer edits Plains Poetry Journal *in Bismarck, North Dakota.*



LIBERAL ARTS

Here's a report on an Etruscan burial site from the newspaper of record:

> The necropolis was described as the largest so far in the area, which was settled between the first and eighth centuries B.C. by the Etruscans.
>
> —*New York Times*, 23 October 1987

Is this what Kierkegaard meant by saying life could only be understood backwards?

Letter From Mensa

by John Martin

Genius: A Clear and Present Danger

I hold in my hand the names of 205 credit-card-carrying members of the human race who've been described by a word that's fast becoming as irritating as superstar, glitz, or life-style. The word is genius, and it's time we recognized, with all Churchillian gravity, that from Stettin in the Baltic to the psychobabble retreats in Marin County, people are being called geniuses at a rate that should make us all want to pull down an iron curtain.

This sinister state of affairs was recently brought home by tributes to two public figures previously suspected of talent, to say nothing of genius: (1) Curly of Three Stooges fame, and (2) Andy Warhol, the recently deceased pop artist. That the first of these was the real article, however, I have on the authority of Steve Allen. Narrating a Three Stooges PBS documentary, Allen unblinkingly pinned the genius tag on Curly, offering in evidence a film clip in which the

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baldish comedian, alternately harassed and humored by a judge and a bailiff, attempts to raise his right hand, swear on a Bible, remove his derby, and hold onto his cane. Curly brought to his befuddlement neither the pathos of Chaplin nor the wit of Fields — although he is unquestionably likable, decent, and competent.

Mr. Warhol's genius, meanwhile, was asserted with casual authority by the *New York Times*: "The combination of his genius and [his followers'] energy produced dozens of notorious events throughout his career." Genius? Campbell soup cans, Brillo boxes, a movie called *Eat* in which the artist Robert Indiana takes 45 minutes to consume a mushroom? Notorious events, unquestionably. But genius?

Perhaps, like me, the reader is sufficiently antique to recall a time when genius was normally reserved for that rare soul who, in Dr. Johnson's phrase, "can do readily what no one else can do at all" — people on the order of Shakespeare, Michelangelo, Rembrandt, Bach, Newton, Tolstoy, and Einstein; people, in short, possessing what the dictionary defines as "transcendent intellectual or creative power." The tribe has never been numerous — to hear the term applied not only to the Curlys and Andy Warhols but to professional football coaches, Method Acting instructors, advertising copywriters, fashion designers, hairdressers, *et al.*, makes me long for the days when transcendent intellectual or creative power wasn't thought of as a civil right. Even the limited humility of Mr. Noel Coward comes to mind: "I believe that since my life began / The most I've had is just a talent to amuse," he said. "Talent," not "genius."

To be sure, genius is only the latest victim of our inflated verbal economy, in which the hypester has replaced the hipster as our chief minter of language. "Super" is a term now used so extensively that it has all the force of "passable" or "OK." "Superstar" has replaced "star" (a term good enough for Jesse Owens and Joan Crawford but apparently not for Carl Lewis and Jane Fonda) and is even now giving way to "megastar." "Existential" has never meant precisely anything, but is now used to mean "heroically exciting in a dull, philosophic way" — as in "the existential dramas of Lina Wertmüller." And "excellence" has now become the solemn rallying cry of at least 5,000 advertising clients, eager to describe their mediocrity, as in the U.S. Post Office claim "We deliver excellence for less."

Perhaps saddest of all is what has happened to "Renaissance man." Time was, the term described someone like Thomas Jefferson, of whom a biographer wrote: "a gentleman of thirty-two who could calculate an eclipse, survey an estate, tie an artery, plan an edifice, try a cause, break a horse, dance a minuet, and play the violin." Today a Renaissance man is anyone who can spell, fill out a tax form, and tell the difference between Chateauneuf de Pape and Ripple. To keep a useful word like genius, then, from further degeneration, let me offer some suggestions that may possess, if not excellence, at least utility. After all, better to light a candle than curse the megadarkness:

First, don't refer to any of your family or friends as a genius. It'll only make them suspicious, and besides, most of us have never seen a genius, let alone sat across from one. If any of your friends insist *they've* seen a genius, make them produce evidence of their subject's ability to do unusual things with Campbell soup cans and Brillo boxes.

Second, before you describe your favorite cosmetics-industry novelist or nightclub comedian as a genius, ask if perhaps he or she couldn't better be described as a qualified genius, a genius with an adjective. Charles Dickens, for example, while he may lack the stature of a genius pure and simple, can quite legitimately be called a "comic genius." So, for that matter, can Charlie Chaplin. Your nightclub comedian, however, probably can't. Be careful.

Third, if you should happen across a legitimate Renaissance man, don't complicate his life by calling him a genius. Jefferson, William Morris, and the Major Robert Gregory so beautifully praised in Yeats's famous poem would each better be described as "*a man of* genius" — someone possessing an extraordinary range of powers but not so overwhelmingly gifted in any one department as to tower above the field. In any case, your chances of meeting an authentic Renaissance man are probably about the same as your chances of running into Judge Crater in a shopping mall.

Finally, if you're one of those people whose mental metabolism requires them to say "genius" at least several times a week, try using it in such modest possessive constructions as the following, where it'll immediately be clear you're not employing the term in any serious sense: "France has a genius for making tourists feel welcome"; "Shirley MacLaine has a genius for simplifying complex international relationships"; "Ronald Reagan has a genius for controlling subordinates."

Several years ago, as I was taking in the excellence of litter that fills the streets in the city of Supermayor Ed Koch, my eye was suddenly caught by a *New York Post* scarehead proclaiming *Polish beauty seized at United Nations*. Apart from the ambiguity of the verb — had she been crudely grabbed by some macho passerby? kidnapped? arrested? — I was curious to have a look at this Slavic Venus and quickly plunked down my 35 cents. Those who recall Maria Ouspenskaya as the elderly gypsy in the old "Wolf Man" movies can perhaps best appreciate my disappointment when I flipped to the picture inside, for though the Polish "beauty" was somewhat younger than Miss Ouspenskaya, her aesthetic impact was roughly the same. Even if she was no beauty, though, she might well be a genius.

John Martin writes from Brooklyn.

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SCREEN

Why Tell It Straight?

by Katherine Dalton

***Matewan*; written and directed by John Sayles; Cinecom Entertainment Group.**

In 1920 Matewan was a little town on the western edge of Mingo County, West Virginia, right on the Kentucky border. It was a town owned and run by the Stone Mountain Coal Company, and when the miners tried to bring in the union, the county in general and Matewan in particular exploded. On May 19, Albert and Lee Felts (of the notorious strong-arm "detective" agency Baldwin-Felts) and 11 other detectives arrived in town to oust the striking miners from the company-owned houses they were occupying. The town's lone policeman, Sid Hatfield, and the mayor, C.C. Testerman, objected, and two days later there was a shoot-out in the streets that left four wounded and 10 dead—including the mayor and seven Baldwin-Felts men. It was by far the bloodiest union skirmish the area had seen up till then.

After the shoot-out, the Baldwin-Felts Agency sent in a man named C.E. Lively. He was to work undercover and open a restaurant in the United Mine Workers' building, to pick up what he could by way of damning evidence against the miners. Lively had no luck, and Hatfield and those miners who had been put on trial for the murder of the Felts brothers were all judged to have acted in self-defense. Lively later killed Hatfield in broad daylight on the McDowell County Courthouse steps—and was himself acquitted, even though Hatfield was said to have been without a gun.

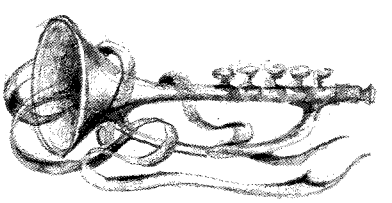
Those seem to be the basic facts of what happened at Matewan. John Sayles, who both wrote and directed the movie *Matewan*, had what seems a very interesting record to start with—clear-cut bad guys (the Baldwin-Felts), internecine quarrels between the striking miners and the imported scabs who needed the work just as badly, all in the middle of Hatfield-McCoy country (Sid Hatfield's name is not a coincidence). The unionization versus vested interests story is not so old that it isn't worth retelling, and these days it's a bit of a relief to see a movie based on some bit of history. It is simply too bad that John Sayles's *Matewan* has so little to do with the real one.

It was, apparently, not enough for Sayles that the detectives actually harassed people, threatened them, and threw them out of their homes into the muddy streets, at dawn and in the rain. Or provoked a shoot-out. In the movie the Baldwin-Felts men catch one of the miner boys stealing coal, and after torturing him, they murder him by slitting his throat. Surely, if such an atrocity had really happened, it would have been mentioned somewhere in the write-ups of the Matewan battle. Surely that would be a classic labor history horror story of capitalists gone crazy. But just as surely, Sayles made it up.

Sayles plays fast and loose with what really happened in other, less important ways. He delays the big shoot-out by several months and brings in the mole Lively right at the beginning, so that in the movie he is partly the architect of the shoot-out, rather than someone brought in as a response. Sayles also exaggerates the union's weakness by having as his main character a lone, undercover union organizer, Joe Kenehan (played by Chris Cooper), as if the union did not have a large building in town (where Lively had his restaurant).

There's nothing wrong with making up a mostly fictional, highly dramatic story around the coal wars. But to take real events and real men, and then twist them to have the nice bloody effect of a slashed boy and his frantic mother, seems somehow dishonest. Sayles stuck to the truth only as far as he deemed it convenient, which in the end just appears lazy. Aside from the (very cinematic) pre-shoot-out drama, the real significance of the Matewan shoot-out actually seems to have been the trial itself, which was covered nationally and gave the union some very good PR. But garroted children make better movies than a boring old courtroom.

If the docudramatization is *Matewan*'s biggest problem, there are other, smaller problems with detail. A good dialect coach, able to train actors to speak with even only one of the many Southern accents, could go to Hollywood and make a mint just rendering people competent. Aside from Sissy Spacek's Loretta Lynn, I have yet to hear a believable (and consistent) Southern accent that's anything more difficult than a Texas drawl. The voice of *Matewan*'s other main character, 16-year-old Danny Radnor (Will Oldham), is done sloppily in an occasional, and stagy, accent, while the narration voice, which is supposed to be that of Danny as an old man, has what sounds like a genuine, and heavy, hills accent. The difference is vast and noticeable—Oldham's voice doesn't



match "pappy's" voice at all, and who ever heard of a man acquiring a backcountry accent as he got older?

Despite two good performances in supporting roles by James Earl Jones and Mary McDonnell, and despite all of *Matewan*'s histrionic coal dust and bloodiness, the movie was insubstantial. There was no sense of place, no feeling of claustrophobia in the shaft scenes, no sense of dirt and ticks about the homeless miners in tents, no feeling of heavy air and hunger or anything that made up that part of West Virginia then, or now. Just more Hollywood pablum, tasteless and well-chewed in a middlebrow attempt at embellishing on a bit of history—history, which, as usual, proves to be a lot more interesting than any of

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the clichés dredged out of John Sayles's head.

They don't know it, and never bother to try to know it, but still there is some power to Appalachia that keeps drawing the moviemakers back. Perhaps it's because Appalachia is another world nestled right here in the midst of our own, a whole other culture, in some ways as foreign and as far away as Tierra del Fuego. Also, mingled with the respect city people have for folks who live still so close to the land, goes a good bit of romanticizing about the glories of the so-called simple life. Not that there's anything simple about scrambling for a living in those mountain areas of Kentucky, Virginia, and West Virginia that are still backward, without much industry, choked with kudzu and rusted-out cars, and scattered with hill farmers. If John Sayles's *Matewan* falls short on other scores, it does manage to convey that, although little else.

Katherine Dalton writes from New York.

STAGE

The Search for Salvation

by David Kaufman

There is a popularly held belief that the promise of theater resided throughout the country. According to the theory, if Broadway was dying, then American theater was thriving west of the Hudson and south of the Delaware Water Gap, nurturing not only the talent but also the audience.

There has been a problem, of course, so overwhelming that no one has even dared address it: how to deal with the effect of theater sprawl. Fifteen years ago, Robert Brustein asked, "Where are the Repertory Critics?" Ever since regional theater became a force to be contended with, the question has been, "Where are the regional critics?" Brustein himself, as critic for *The New Republic*, has made it his business to visit Minneapolis, Washington, DC, Chicago, New Haven, and yes, even New York. To a lesser degree, John Simon of *New York Magazine*, Jack Kroll of *Newsweek*, and a bevy of *Times* critics have made their excursions to the provinces, catching the prominent offerings at the more fashionable regional theaters. But Broadway has not been replaced so much as diffused. Regional theaters have come to secure attention on the basis of reputation alone, thereby emulating Broadway.

Two summers ago, American Theater Exchange was set up exporting three regional productions to the Joyce Theater in New York. But beyond the concept of the American Theater Exchange itself (and ironically, there was never any "exchange" involved), there was nothing distinguished about *Faulkner's Bicycle* (which originated at the Yale Repertory Theater), *In the Belly of the Beast* (from Los Angeles' Mark Taper Forum), or *Season's Greetings* (from Houston's Alley Theater). If this was the best that regional theater had to offer, then regional theater seemed no healthier than New York theater. If the Goodman, the Guthrie, the Actors Theater of Louisville, the Mark Taper Forum, Steppenwolf, the Alley Theater, and certain other celebrated companies or theaters became acclaimed, haven't they relied on marketing as much as Broadway ever did?

Now, two years later, the American Theater Exchange has sponsored its second program of plays, once again at the Joyce Theater, with results hardly any better than before. This time four productions were featured, and only the last—*Holy Ghosts*—proved worthwhile. The Long Wharf Theater production of Joe Cacaci's *Self Defense* provided little more than a few strong performances (notably by Charles Cioffi as a DA); the Berkeley Repertory Theater version of Dickens' *Hard Times*, as adapted by Stephen Jeffreys, had some highlighted theatrical moments under Richard E.T. White's direction but could never really shed the shadow of the Royal Shakespeare Company's *Nicholas Nickleby*; and the Wilma Theater's (Philadelphia) rendering of Orwell's *1984*, as adapted by Pavel Kohout, was a letdown in every respect, particularly in its technologically busy production.

Whatever else the American Theater Exchange may advocate, it seems to lack a respect for the playwright, since the playbills for both *Hard Times* and *1984* failed to include them, no matter how inadvertent such omissions may have been. There also seemed to be a message in the poster designed to promote the festival. As rendered by Polish artist Rafal Olbinski, it featured three theater masks that allude to the American flag. But instead of the characteristic smile or frown, each of these masks has an enigmatic expression, suggesting better than anything else the confused state of our theater today.

Holy Ghosts, however, was a superb production of a valuable work. At its best, Romulus Linney's play about a backwoods Pentecostal religious meeting captured the spirit of a class of people who might have stepped out of *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men*. To this end, the San Diego Rep production is truly an asset, evoking the mood of the rural South. But Linney's blessing is also his curse, for in creating 15 distinctive personalities and telling their stories in roughly two hours, he could not avoid making them into types. The sense of verisimilitude he so masterfully achieved is necessarily undermined by the formula at work.

The leader of the clan is one Reverend Obedia Buckhorn Sr., a self-proclaimed minister who preaches the gospel ("Well, friends—what is real religion? One thing I know is it don't have no beginnin' and don't have no end—it's a happenin' all the time") and who, as effectively portrayed by Ollie Nash, looks and sounds like Burl Ives. We learn that Rev. Buckhorn has had six wives—and is working on his seventh, the woebegone Nancy Shedman (Diana Castle), who is miserably married to Coleman (Bradley Fisher).

"They shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them." While such practices are decidedly illegal, their existence is well-known south of the Mason-Dixon line.

Coleman is as "dumb as a ditch," a "clod," and "the fool of creation," as his wife Nancy calls him. About the only thing he *had* going for him was the "fish-farm" he inherited from his father, but even that has dried up through neglect. While it would be difficult to blame Nancy for fleeing Coleman and entering "into a tender, human relationship" with another, it's equally hard to see Buckhorn as an improvement.

By the end of the play, Linney supplies an ironic reversal as hard to antici-

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pate as retrospectively inevitable. Nancy leaves both men in the lurch; but Coleman, who was the only voice of reason inasmuch as he was the lone disbeliever in a throng of Buckhorn's followers, joins the fold.

Holy Ghosts is predominantly an ensemble work, and most of the first act is used to introduce the motley crew. These include an ex-Sunday school teacher dismissed after 20 odd years of service because she could not conform to increasingly permissive tendencies; a retired, alcoholic lawyer; a cancer-ridden bachelor; a hapless youth who never overcame the loss of his "bird-dog"; an unhappily hitched interracial couple; a pair of love-starved truck drivers; a guilt-ridden spinster; a simpleminded adolescent; a painfully shy woman who deserted her husband and family to wander into Buckhorn's makeshift service; and Buckhorn's son, who has just become manager of a bowling alley ("I don't know how to explain it—they just seem to go together—Jesus and bowling").

At a certain point, the thought occurs that with only some minor changes in the script, Linney could have told the same story within the context of an AA meeting. If there were a common denominator to these lost souls, it would have to be the palpable loneliness which has brought them together. Each of them has some unholy ghost to avoid. Under Douglas Jacobs' inspired direction, public confessional and participatory religion clearly becomes a way for them to feel they belong in a world that has abandoned them; the passion of their involvement reaches almost sexual frenzy when they finally get around to snake-handling, rolling on the floor, and glossolalia.

A beauty of the conceit is that we hear the snakes and watch the believers handle them, though real snakes are never used in what otherwise resembles a documentary production. As a device, the invisibility of the snakes reinforces the faith these fanatics must have to risk their lives at the height of their religious passion. In a recent interview with Mervyn Rothstein, Linney explains why he has endorsed this method of the production: "When I did it at the Alley Theater, I just had the actors pantomime the snakes, and I only allow the play to be done that way now. What happens is that you see right through the hands of the people handling them, you see what's on the actor's faces, because they're staring at something that if it were real would be within an inch of their faces, with that little black tongue going in and out, and if it bites them, well, wham, good-bye."

While the American Theater Exchange has done little to confirm that regional theater is the salvation of theater in America, it's encouraging to note that *Holy Ghosts* has been performed at over 100 theaters throughout the U.S., since it was written in the mid-70's.

David Kaufman writes from New York.

REVISIONS

Wonderbread

"The tenderness was already turning nasty," writes Harold Brodkey in "Falling and Ascending Bodies," a short story from *The Bread Loaf Anthology of Contemporary American Short Stories* (edited by Robert Pack and Jay Parini, Hanover and London: University Press of New England; $12.95). In a first-person account of a homosexual affair between two "Jew-American" youths ("Middle Western, middle-class"), Brodkey muses on Ulysses, Silenus, Carthage, Gaul, and Roman camps. To make his meaning clearer, perhaps, Brodkey elaborates, "Then he began doing it as if I were inanimate, and my back was his teddy bear or his bike tire; that was OK, but then it was not OK."

If Brodkey cannot make up his mind what he wants to write about, or how, in *Bread Loaf* he is in good (if that's the word) company. Ann Beattie finds it irresistible to tell us about "Alice and her brother-in-law Lem [who] are on their way to Billy's apartment so that Alice can get her daughter Nicki and take her to Connecticut" (the opening sentence of the "Gypsy Moths"). "My father didn't drink," states, on the other hand, Rosellen Brown in "A Good Deal" (except "a little schnapps on *shabbos*, gone in a blink"). And, John Irving informs us, "This is a memoir, but please understand that (to any writer with a good imagination) all memoirs are false" ("Trying to Save Piggy Snead"). It may be possible, theoretically, to come up with good prose about "The first time Ben asked Laurel to fly to Wisconsin with him to spend a week with his father [and] Laurel said no" ("The Lure" by Mary Morris). But would hapless Ulysses have become embedded in Brodkey's homosexual fiction, were he a Piggy Snead, whose "retardation . . . had deprived him of his human speech . . . [so that] [h]e *oinked* . . . (that was his language; he learned it from his friends, as we learn ours)" ("Trying to Save Piggy Snead")?

Poor Chekhov, poor Ray Bradbury! Now we have Cynthia Ozick and Tim O'Brien, writing, respectively, of concentration camps ("The Shawl") and Vietnam ("The Things They Carried") as if they were *invented*, after another dreary literary party.

If good writing is "putting one true sentence after another," then most of *Bread Loaf* is thin fare indeed. New York City, with its "eight million stories" (that was back in the 60's)

may seem like the universe to its "artistic community," but the temptation to level together Argentine "disappearances," "humping" through Vietnam, unexplicable middle-class, middle-age divorces, and swinish curiosities appears too great to fight. Representative of what passes for artistic fiction these days, *all* the stories of the *Bread Loaf* endeavor mightily to reduce the world to a slide-show of humdrum humanity. Even death, thrown in for good measure ("Trying to Save Piggy Snead," "Willis Carr at the Bleak House," "The Things They Carried," etc.), fails to make any single story in the book *live*. American fiction has degenerated into a parlor game for "caring, sensitive" souls, very concerned with their place in the literary pantheon of "here-and-now."

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Future Shock?

by Gary S. Vasilash

This won't be easy. But, it may be the future, at least according to a number of science-fiction writers collectively known as the "cyberpunks." More disturbingly, there seems to be a number of scientists and researchers who agree. Hang on.

The first part of the word *cyberpunks* comes from *cybernetics*, a term coined by Norbert Wiener in 1948. Essentially, cybernetics deals with informational feedback, which is of some importance to the age in which we find ourselves. Even though the electromechanical devices of today have an apparent dominance, it's superficial. Consider, for example, your VCR. An electromechanical device, right? Yes, but useless without the information—audio and visual—coded on the tape. You can hold up a piece of conventional film to light and see images; do that with a videotape and you'll see nothing. Another example is the CD. And while personal computers proved to be a bust in the home market, even the smallest businesses are equipped with PC's.

Important to note about PC's and other computers is that the "hardware," the nuts and bolts, is of lesser importance than the software, or the instructions, that make it work. Software, of course, is information.

The last half of the term *cyberpunk* is easy. It refers to a tendency to be hard-edged and street-smart in the alleys and stainless steel sewers that few others dare to tread. This environment would scare the pants off an Isaac Asimov. It's a postnuclear landscape that cyberpunks inhabit, a place wherein conventional geopolitical boundaries cease to exist, torn asunder by multinational corporations and collectives.

Since speculative fiction must be an extrapolation from a given, the possibility of such a world becomes increasingly evident. Large corporations are becoming larger through buy-outs of other corporations and through "partnerships" or joint ventures, usually with foreign firms. It's a case of power simultaneously expanding and becoming more concentrated. Think of it as nuclear fusion.

Physically, in the world of cyberpunks, technology has proliferated so that the environment does not resemble the antiseptic interior of the starship *Enterprise* but the dark and damp guts of the *Nostromo* in the film *Alien*. The place tends to be Earth. And even if it's elsewhere, there is a degree of sameness, as opposed to the exotic differences characteristic of earlier sci-fi writers. It's a gritty reality, to be sensed in the video arcades of today, particularly since they have lost much of their popularity. Game screens vary from eye-aching brightness to a low-burning flicker; the plastic surfaces are scarred and fatigued; silver-colored duct tape serves as the Band-Aid of aching electrical lines. Hangers-on wear black T-shirts bearing the emblems of a fascist nightmare. Their jeans are worn, not through use, but as if they have been exposed to a steady stream of atomic particles. Sexuality *is* there, like a low-frequency hum, but it's a hard-edged condition.

Who are these writers? They include Bruce Sterling (*The Artificial Kid* and *Schismatrix*), Greg Bear (*Eon*), and Rudy Rucker (*The 57th Franz Kafka*). Premier among them is William Gibson, Hugo, Nebula, and Philip K. Dick, awards-winning author of *Neuromancer* and *Count Zero*. To rephrase a line from Stephen King to describe Clive Barker, "I have seen the future of the future. His name is William Gibson." He writes like a man with electricity in his veins and semiconductors for nerves.

Consider the first line of *Neuromancer*: "The sky above the port was the color of television"—not much there, sort of a high-school image—"tuned to a dead channel": a dead-reckoned payoff. In Gibson's world, technology tends to be cheap and humans nothing more than technological extensions:

> Night City was like a deranged experiment in social Darwinism, designed by a bored researcher who kept one thumb permanently on the fast-forward button. Stop hustling and you sank without a trace, but move too swiftly and you'd break the fragile surface of the black mark; either way, you were gone, with nothing left of you but some vague memory in the mind of a fixture like Ratz, though heart or lungs or kidneys might survive in the service of some stranger with New Yen for the clinic tanks.

As repulsive as the market for body parts may sound, Gibson is positively benign compared to the contemporary use of brain grafts from dead fetuses for curing neurological disorders.

The physical setting of Gibson's two novels is "BAMA, the Sprawl, the Boston-Atlanta Metropolitan Axis." A look at a population-density map generated from data provided by a Landsat satellite will make the evidence of a creeping megalopolis clear; dreams of agrarian existence will have to be located in New Mexico (or old).

But Gibson's turf is "the matrix," or "cyberstate." It's a place of pure information that can be accessed through one means only: by becoming "jacked-in" through a computer deck. It is the other-dimensional universe where software, the invisible network, takes on form, where consciousness—which is, in one sense, nothing more than bits and bytes—can circuitously travel. Once inside, the plot is not unlike that of any other pop fiction: the "good guy," typically an outcast, must overcome seemingly impossible odds as he takes on the enemy, usually an individual who is one with a massive organization.

What is off-putting is that cyberspace is not merely Gibson's invention:

> It is now well established that neutral networks [i.e., "cognitive information processing structure(s) based upon models of brain function"] can carry out a number of powerful, general-purpose information processing operations. Among these are the implementation of an arbitrary continuous mapping from n-dimensional space to m-dimensional space based solely upon a set of examples of the mapping's action.

This text goes on to discuss the Grossberg/Mingolla Vision Processing Network and the Kukushima Neocognition; the Kosko Fuzzy Cognitive Map; the Carpenter-Grossberg Adaptive Resonance Network; the Grossberg/Kuperstein Oculomotor Control Neutral Network; and others. It is precisely the topology of Gibson's universe. Yet it comes from the Hecht-Nielsen Neurocomputer Corporation of San Diego.

The field of neurocomputers is not the same as artificial intelligence. AI explores the ways and means to make

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computers "think" by developing rules and procedures (heuristics) that structure information from a data base into human-like knowledge. AI is something of an analog to human thinking. The neurocomputer people are actually building silicon chips that are an analog to the neural networks within our brains and are devising the procedures to enable them to work as such. AI can be thought of as two steps away from thinking; neurocomputers are just one step back. And assuming that developments continue apace — for example, instead of silicon, genetic engineers could undoubtedly provide neurocomputer people with an organic substance — we could find ourselves in a world wherein the "matrix" is, in a sense, tangible. The concept makes the skin crawl — human flesh, not that material grown in the tanks of the Nephrine Black Medicals of Sterling's *Schismatrix*.

With few exceptions, SF tends to be escapist. Many — if not most — of its contemporary works have been subpar. This can be dated from the release of *Star Wars*. Some publishers, apparently, figured that if a space opera could make millions, then their techno concertos could do pretty well, too. They failed to realize that it is the visual texture that makes *Star Wars*, not the Force. But in spite of that, there has been the deluge of would-be Skywalkers and sword-and-sorcery variations on Tolkien.

Cyberpunk SF is, in contrast, something that can result in thinking. When its writers are at their best, they are a vacuum-sintered amalgam of J.G. Ballard, Philip K. Dick, and William Burroughs: radioactive heavy metals. Their work is as disturbing as they seem to be disturbed. In a very real sense, this rending of comfortable conventions serves a cautionary function. In a world where teenage West German hackers can tap into NASA top secret data banks a continent away (through the "matrix," presumably), and a "well-meaning" genetic researcher can inject trees with a bioengineered product (he was reported tearful when he had to cut the mutants down), writers that throw expectations into hyperspace and jar our bearings certainly deserve our attention.

And since they are hip, it's all for the better.

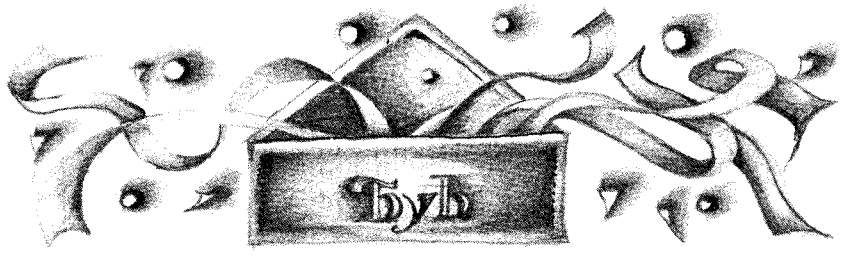
Gary Vasilash is editor of Production *magazine.*

On '*Scientific American* Goes to Moscow'

The September issue of *Chronicles* was the best ever. I was especially glad to see Paul Gottfried's analysis of Bloom's book, because my reaction to it was not as ecstatically positive as that of many other conservatives, and Mr. Gottfried points precisely to reasons; i.e., Bloom is "at bottom a welfare state Whig," and it is the degradation of this Whiggery he is lamenting, not the encroachment of the state on ever larger areas of human freedom.

But the article that struck me the most forcefully was the one about *Scientific American*. I had never seen *any* criticism of *Scientific American* in *any* publication or by *any* person since I first subscribed to it in the late 1950's. I have always cherished it as a unique and authoritative source of scientific news and information accessible, for the most part, to the average layman. Some of the articles in each issue were beyond my comprehension, but there were invariably enough that were within my grasp to make each issue an adventure to be looked forward to. During the past seven or eight years, however, I have become increasingly irritated by an undisguised political bias in the treatment of scientific issues of the day. I began to notice this from the moment President Reagan was first inaugurated. Authors made flat statements (not conjectures or propositions to be tested) that Reagan's strategic defense was unattainable; that the "yellow rain" reported in Afghanistan and elsewhere was in reality bee feces; that Reagan's economic policies were causing poverty and economic decline; that (as Professor Tomkin points out) increases in U.S. military strength in fact decrease U.S. security; and that a nuclear freeze would be beneficial to the U.S.

Professor Tomkin does not make any connection between this leftward bias that has become more and more evident during recent years and the fact that the magazine lost money "in the last year or two." I wonder if there isn't a connection there. I do know that I myself have become so increasingly irritated and offended by these departures from a truly scientific approach that I have been toying with the idea of canceling my subscription, and I wonder if other readers — and perhaps some advertisers — are beginning to react as I have.



In any event, this commentary has prompted me to make the decision I've been putting off; I'll give *Scientific American* another chance. The next time I see an article that allows a leftward political bias to color the treatment of a technical or scientific subject, as in the cases I have mentioned, I shall sit down and write a letter to the editor, canceling my subscription and explaining exactly why. It's the only way I can vote on the issue, and I hope there may be others who will be moved to do the same thing.

— John R. Cassidy
Fairfax, VA

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